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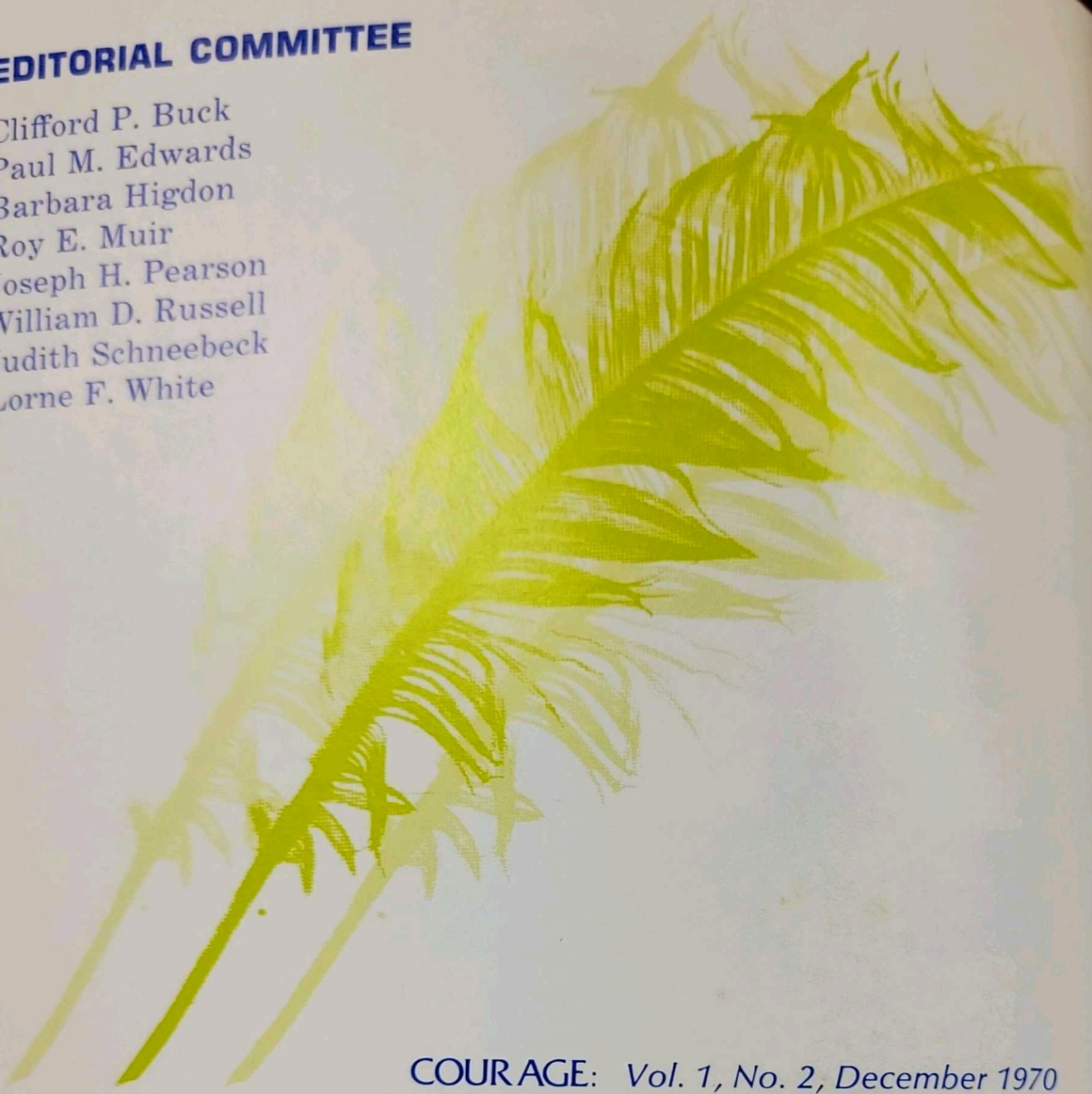

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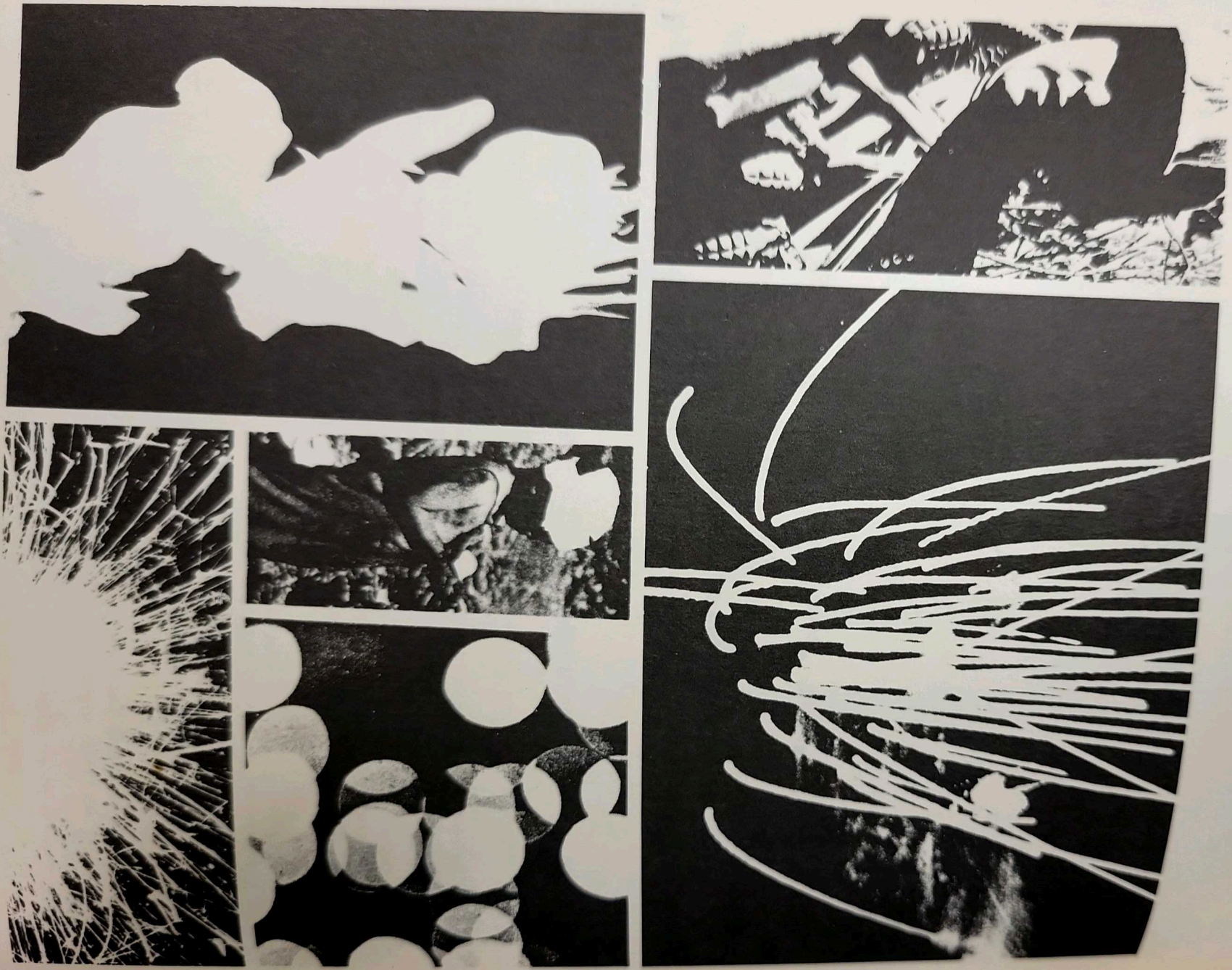
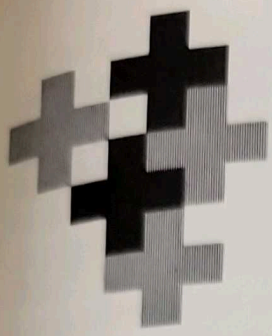
COURAGE

A JOURNAL OF HISTORY, THOUGHT AND ACTION





The Church Triumphant: A Case Study of Vietnam, the Tragedy That Need Not Have Been

Dayle Bethel

What we have done to the Vietnamese has no parallel in human history: the ruthless slaughter of whole villages, the indiscriminate spraying of deadly chemicals on vast areas, and the accompanying increase of malformed births, the annihilation of a generation of Vietnamese young men, the destruction of a country and a culture.

There are within the scriptures of the church some passages which have particular meaning for the present day. One of these is the twenty-first paragraph of Section 85 of the Doctrine and Covenants. A portion of that paragraph reads as follows:

> . . . I give unto you a commandment, that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom; teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that is expedient for you to understand; of things both in heaven and in earth, and under the earth; things which have been; things which are; things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home; things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations; and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries, and of kingdoms, that ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again, to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.

It has taken the church a long time to grow up. For a long time we did not understand such scriptures as this. At least we did not pay much attention to them.

Imagine, if you will, that we had grown up sooner. Imagine that we had begun back in the 1920's and 30's and 40's to heed this part of the gospel. If we had, we would have understood, with clarity and depth comprehension, the powerful forces which have influenced the course of history and the historical events of the past half century. In the paragraphs which follow a case study of an episode in human history, the Vietnamese conflict, is used to portray the issues which are here at stake.

There were some persons who understood what was happening, some persons who acquired the insights and understandings concerning man's social and cultural world which the church, as a body, was counseled to acquire as a part of its preparation for mission. Lester Ward understood. In 1909 he made the following prediction in an address delivered at

Ruskin College in England:

> What do we hear all over the world? Nothing but the subterranean roar of that great mass of mankind, infinitely larger than all the other classes put together; that class is rumbling and seething and working, and coming to consciousness; and when they do come to consciousness they will take the reins of power in their hands . . .[1]

Julian Huxley understood. In 1944, while the world was engulfed in the holocaust of World War II, he wrote that

> The world's most important fact is not that we are in a war, but that we are in a revolution . . . There is occurring something which is no less than a world transformation . . . a process of drastic change, when history is being made much more rapidly than usual, and the whole framework of the ideas and institutions by which and in which we live is being entirely reshaped into a quite new form.[2]

More recently the reality of revolution has been noted by David Wallick:

> Today we are living on the edge of a volcano which has already begun to erupt. The Communist so-called "liberation" of China, unrest in Africa, the situation in Vietnam, the activity of minority groups in the U. S. and those who are sincere in their student protest are but tongues of a revolutionary flame that smolders in the depths and threatens to burst out and engulf us all.
>
> As we peer into the volcano, we see only the red fires of Communism and assume that it, and it alone, is the cause of all our trouble. Here is our first great mistake. Not communism but revolution is the fundamental fact we must face; revolution which is world-wide, in fact, the first truly world-wide revolution in history, the first time that everywhere all institutions of the past seem inadequate and all things appear simultaneously and unprecedentedly out of joint. Communism has not caused this revolution, but it has developed as one of the most serious efforts to understand it and as the most powerful world force that has set out deliberately to direct it.
>
> Any political or religious movement that hopes to act relevantly or to exercise a decisive influence in our world today must understand the nature of the basic revolution.[3]

Imagine, again, that by 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949 we, the members of the church, had been prepared in the way suggested in Section 85:21; imagine that 200,000 Latter Day Saints had understood clearly the great revolution that was beginning to take place in Asia and Africa. Imagine that every Latter Day Saint in the late 1940's had understood that awful yearning that was beginning to burn in millions of Asian breasts, a yearning for freedom and dignity and the right to be human beings, a yearning that a decade later was to burst forth from millions of African breasts. If we had been prepared, *if we had been the church,* in the late 1940's, we could have bent history in a different direction, and perhaps we could have saved our nation from one of the most terrible mistakes and one of the deepest tragedies of its history. But Latter Day Saints were not prepared, and no one else was prepared either.[4] There was no strong clear voice; there was no one to be the church in those fateful years following World War II. Let me review briefly what the cost has been because the church was not there and thus point to what I believe is our most pressing task for the future.

The story begins in the early 1930's, when a group of dedicated Vietnamese nationalists came together and founded an organization which eventually came to be called, a decade later, the Vietminh (Vietnamese Independence League). The Vietminh were dedicated to one thing: ending French control and exploiting their country. The French had conquered Vietnam along with the rest of Indochina during the mid-1800's. By the turn of the century France had conquered all of Indochina and had turned it into one big penal colony, with the population being used as slave labor to produce rice and rubber for the French empire.[5]

Throughout the period of French occupation there were constant uprisings against the oppressive colonial rule. These uprisings were ruthlessly suppressed.[6] At the beginning of World War II, after sixty years of colonial government, the French were operating eighty-one prisons. Only two per cent of the children were receiving elementary education, and these were primarily the children of the wealthy, aristocratic class that the French used to govern the population. The general population of Vietnam was without schools, doctors, hospitals, libraries, or anything connected with civilized life. Such was the result of French colonialism in Vietnam. President Roosevelt is said to have observed shortly before his death in 1945 that the French had been in Vietnam for a hundred years and the Vietnamese were worse off than before the French rule.

Thus it was that the Vietnamese who came to be known as the Vietminh dreamed of freedom and liberty for their country. They were inspired by the Russian and American Revolutions. The histories of Russia and the United States were proof that determined people could successfully gain freedom from oppressive overlords. One of the Vietminh's ablest leaders, a young man by the name of Ho Chi Minh, had journeyed to England, the United States, and Russia to learn how he could best assist his people in their struggle for freedom. Apparently, after all his travels, he favored the United States, however, because when he and other Vietnamese nationalists framed the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence from the French in late 1945 it began:

> **All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.[7]**

But this is getting ahead of my story. In 1940 the Japanese invaded and gained control of Vietnam during the height of their successes in the South Pacific. For a time they permitted the French to continue their rule of Vietnam under the Japanese military. Later they appointed a wealthy Vietnamese aristocrat, Bao Dai, as a puppet emperor. During the war the Vietminh, under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, became one of our staunchest allies. They kept the Japanese busy in that part of the Pacific combatting the guerilla warfare they waged. During the last year of the war the Vietminh kept the entire Japanese 21st Division tied down.[8] Many U. S.

pilots, downed by Japanese anti-aircraft fire, were rescued and returned to American bases by the Vietminh. Our leaders, President Roosevelt and our military leaders in the Pacific, promised the Vietminh that when the war was over we would support their fight for independence from the French.[9] President Roosevelt spoke out strongly both at home and at international conferences for the self-determination of all peoples, and particularly for the Vietnamese. Shortly after the end of the war, Ho Chi Minh told his people:

> We are convinced that the Allied nations which at Tehran and San Francisco have acknowledged the principles of self-determination and equality of all nations will not refuse to acknowledge the independence of Vietnam.[10]

Immediately following World War II, not only the Vietminh but Asians generally "looked to the United States as a champion of freedom and liberty and as a partner in their struggle to free themselves from the suppression of colonialism and feudalism. . . ."[11]

If you know your history you will remember that Roosevelt died just before the end of the war. The new American leadership under Truman became more and more frightened by Russia and Communism. In a few years, from the end of 1945 to 1948, there occurred a complete turn around in American foreign policy. One of the tragic results of this change in American policy was Vietnam. We sold Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh down the river.[12] We not only let the French re-enslave the Vietnamese people but also in the end we paid them to do it. By 1949 the Vietminh had almost won the war from the French singlehandedly, without our support. And at that point we began pouring money and weapons to the French. In 1950 dollar aid to the French in support of the Vietnam war was approximately $150,000,000. This had grown by 1954 to over $1 billion per year.[13] But again the Vietminh, our former allies, completely defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, in spite of our money and our weapons.

Do you know what we did then? We took over the job ourselves. It happened like this. In 1954, after Dien Bien Phu, the Vietminh had nearly complete control of Vietnam. If they had kept going they could have killed every Frenchman in their country. But they didn't. After the French surrendered, the Vietminh agreed to discuss the conditions under which the French would leave Vietnam at a special conference to be convened in Geneva. England, Russia, France, Communist China, the United States, and the Vietminh attended this conference.

The Geneva Conference came to two agreements:[14]

1. Free elections were to be held in all of Vietnam in two years, or in other words, in July 1956.
2. Preparations for these elections were to be carried on by both the Vietminh and the French. The French were to regroup in the Southern part of Vietnam to engage in such preparations; Vietminh forces were to regroup in the North to do the same.

Both the Vietminh and the French were to permit campaigning by any party or group who wished to campaign during this two year period. The irony of it is that the Vietminh and the French kept their part of the bargain.

Once again, this could have been the end of the Vietnam war. After decades of fighting, the Vietnamese could have had their country for themselves. Do you know why it wasn't the end of the war? The United States did not want free elections. Eisenhower wrote the reasons in his memoirs. It was simply that U. S. leaders knew on the basis of their intelligence sources that if there were free elections in Vietnam in 1956, Ho Chi Minh would win at least 80 per cent of the vote.[15] So we set up a puppet dictator, a Catholic, Ngo Dinh Diem, whom the Buddhist peasants, a majority of the Vietnamese population at that time, hated and distrusted. We poured money and weapons to Diem and helped him to develop a police state which even outdid the French in its policies of terror and torture. There were then two Vietnams, North and South, which the United States created by its disregard of the Geneva agreements.

In spite of this development, Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh didn't give up the hope of free elections in all of Vietnam. In the South the Diem government, which we were supporting financially, became so brutal that it soon had a full-scale rebellion on its hands. The rebels, who came to be known as the Viet Cong or National Liberation Front, called on Ho and the North for help in the conduct of civil war and terrorist activities against the Diem government. Do you know what Ho's answer was? In effect he said: "Cool it; if you get involved in organized rebellion and terrorism in the South, you will jeopardize our chances of ever getting free elections." The result was a bitter dispute between the Viet Cong and Ho Chi Minh, but he stuck to this position for five years, from 1955 to 1960.

By 1960 it had become clear that elections would not be permitted by the United States. The North then indicated agreement, in principle, with the civil wars being waged in the South by the Viet Cong, but warned that it could not help materially with that struggle for several years until it had built up its own economy. So the Viet Cong had to go it alone with almost no help from the North. But again, by 1963 and 1964, the peasants, the Buddhists, the masses of Vietnamese, the National Liberation Front, had won the war from the aristocratic, autocratic Diem government and the succession of equally aristocratic and autocratic regimes which the United States frantically pulled together after Diem's overthrow. Again the war could have been over, but the United States became even more directly involved in the government and the fighting in the south. At this point the North began to give massive support to the rebellion in the South. It became clear that the only way we would be able to maintain a U. S. government in South Vietnam would be to take over the fighting ourselves. In 1965 we did just that.

You know the rest of the story. It is contemporary history. But have you really understood what we have done to this little country? By our own admission we have unleashed against Vietnam, a country which is smaller than the State of California and less than half the size of Texas, the mightiest array of air power and fire power in history. It is not possible here to discuss in detail what this has meant to the Vietnamese, the ruthless slaughter of whole villages, the indiscriminate spraying of deadly chemicals on vast areas, both populated and unpopulated, and the accompanying increase of malformed births, the annihilation of a generation of Vietnamese young men, the destruction of a country and a culture. What we have done to the Vietnamese has no parallel in human history. Not even the horrors of Nazi policies in World War II can be compared to our record in Vietnam. The following observation of an Indian editor is both an understatement and an expression of Asian feeling: "What is happening in Vietnam is sickening, and is bound to make the U.S.A. a deeply hated nation in Asia for decades to come."[16]

Think what it could have meant if the church had listened, had taken seriously the counsel in Doctrine and Covenants 85:21. Think of the terror and tragedy and suffering which this little nation might have been spared. Think of the blot which our nation will forever carry on its record in history. I really believe that if, in 1946 and 1947, 1954, or even in 1965, 200,000 Latter Day Saints had been ready to stand up and say "NO!" in the name of God and humanity, it would have made a difference. I really believe that if we had written the papers and books about the facts and realities of Asia and the twentieth century revolution, instead of permitting lone voices like Ward's and Huxley's and Sorokin's and others to be drowned out and forgotten, it would have made a difference. I believe that 200,000 alert, informed, responsible Latter Day Saints could have engaged in dynamic encounter at the very heart of the zionizing, civilizing, humanizing work of God in history. And it would have made a difference. But we didn't grow up soon enough. We weren't ready to be sent forth.

Early in 1970 I shared these concerns with a group of people at the University of Illinois. I suggested then that we dare not be unprepared again. But months later, as I type these lines, hostilities are raging in the Middle East and I am brought face to face with the fact that we are, again, unprepared. Where in all the land is the unbiased group or organization which can stand today and speak with authority and objectivity about the Middle East? Where are the experts in the church on the Middle East? During the past twenty years there should have been individuals and little groups of individuals in congregations throughout all the church engaged in depth study and analysis of the Middle East. These groups should have been serving as resources to their congregations, neighboring congregations, and other community groups. Latter Day Saints should have been closely following, watching, writing,

and speaking about the Middle East, instead of doing the little things we do in our congregations so much of the time. When will we ever learn?

I still have a dream that one day, Latter Day Saints, throughout the land and in every land, will decide *to be the church*, the people of God. I still have a dream that as that people, we will engage in dynamic encounter with the systems of the culture of our time. The need for such a church, such a people, is more urgent today than at any time in history. The shape of the culture of the twenty-first century hangs in the balance.

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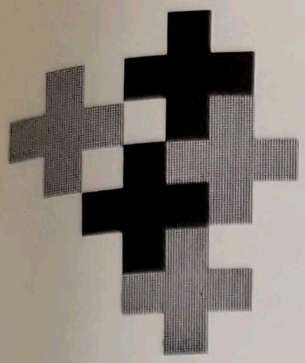
1. Lester F. Ward, **Glimpses of the Cosmos**, Vol. VI, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1918, p. 340.
2. Julian Huxley, **On Living in a Revolution**, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1944, pp. 1 and 36.
3. David E. Wallick, unpublished paper, 1966, p. 1.
4. Arthur K. Davis writes that even today the relatively prosperous sections of the Western world, particularly governments and social classes having a vested interest in the old order, fail to comprehend the depth and pervasiveness of the revolutionary currents which characterize our time. In "Lessons from Sorokin," **Sociological Theory, Values, and Sociocultural Change**, edited by Edward A. Tiriyakian, Harper and Row, New York, 1967, p. 4.
5. George M. Kahin and John W. Lewis, **The United States in Vietnam**, Dial Press, 1967, pp. 14-17. See also Felix Greene, **Vietnam! Vietnam!**, Fulton Publishing Company, Palo Alto, California, 1966.
6. One of the persons who assisted the French in their exploitation of the Vietnamese population was a man by the name of Ngo Dinh Diem, a wealthy Vietnamese aristocrat who later, in 1954, was chosen by American leaders to head a U. S. supported and financed puppet government in Vietnam. See Kahin and Lewis, **Ibid.**, pp. 66-67.
7. From the first paragraph of the "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam" Ho Chi Minh, **Selected Works**, reprinted in Kahin and Lewis, **Ibid.**, p. 345.
8. Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 16.
9. **Ibid.**, pp. 16-17.
10. Harry S. Ashmore and William C. Baggs, **Mission to Hanoi**, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1968, p. 204.
11. Dayle M. Bethel, "Asia: Frontier of Freedom," **Iowa Councilor**, Iowa Council for the Social Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1957, p. 5.
12. During the 1950's lone voices spoke out deploring this betrayal and calling Americans to awaken to the realities of the mid-twentieth century. See for example, **Ibid.**, pp. 5-7, and William O. Douglas, **North from Malaya**, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1953. Again, if only the church had been present! Instead of lone voices there should have been thousands of enlightened voices calling the nation to account.
13. Kahin and Lewis, **op. cit.**, p. 32.
14. The United States refused to sign the agreements, but agreed reluctantly not to obstruct their implementation.
15. Dwight D. Eisenhower, **Mandate for Change: 1953-1956**, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1963, p. 372.
16. Greene, **op. cit.**, p. 134. For the views of other Asians, the Japanese, see Howard Zinn, **Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal**, Beacon Press, Boston, 1967, pp. 9-18.

Dayle Bethel is an associate professor of sociology at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa. He served as a missionary in the Orient for seven years.

the kids in elgin
walk for hunger
standing up like prickles
the first in time for them
coming on
neither smug nor narrowminded nor arrogant
wanting to flow quietly
in a beautiful land
the way their own fox river
enters the spring
we find our dignity in the kids
a source of pride
they can administer sacraments
they guard vineyards
they are spikes for holding candles upright
they stand first in a list
and they can end debates

john knoepfle



Sex Roles in a Changing World

Chris Piatt

Every human being should be allowed by society to develop and to choose goals in accordance with personality, competence, and interest, rather than sex.

We live in a sexist society. We categorize individuals on the basis of sex first and only secondarily on factors of personality, competence and individuality. Sexual differentiation carries over into areas that have little to do innately with biology. This method of categorizing is not necessary to social organization. Rather, it leaves unfulfilled the demands of our present, complex society and the needs of the human beings in this society. We can no longer afford this simplistic, functional division of humanity.

Women, who have traditionally held the subordinate position in this dichotomy of sex, are excluded from full participation in the human venture by virtue of their reproductive systems. The old "anatomy is destiny" idea is still with us. Accordingly, women are seen as essentially unique creatures governed (limited) by physical *sexual* definitions. This physical definition colors our thinking on every aspect of individual woman's personality and identity. We view woman as nurturer and comforter. She is intuitive, instinctive and practical, but not abstractly intelligent. Her basic thinking patterns are personal and emotional. *If* she is exceptionally level-headed, she might be paid the compliment of being told she "thinks like a man."

There is an aura of mysticism surrounding the qualities of motherhood, and it is assumed that every woman is, or will be, or should desire to be, a mother and a homemaker. Women's magazines, women's sections in newspapers and advertising attempting to reach women all center around marriage, children and home of the woman. Marriage, motherhood and the home have been held as the sacred shrines of females. These are projected to be the natural end results of womanly maturity and fulfillment.

This persistent catagorization and stereotyping of women has its roots in historical convenience and is perpetuated presently by our

socialization processes and by the conservatism of the fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology.

In more primitive times and societies, it is a biological survival of the fittest that is the key to existence. And survival, biologically speaking, is determined by reproduction capacities. Many children were needed in order to insure survival of the species. Also women could not completely control their fertility. Anthropologists tell us that the production of children is the primary creative thrust of primitive societies and that a woman is fulfilled solely by being a woman and by having children. Combining these conditions, women are often pregnant and are defined by their sexual and reproductive contributions to society.

Our society has changed. And our relationship to our biology has also changed. Our needs are much more complex and our survival is now a question of the quality of our life, and no longer one of quantity. Humanity is now realizing potentials and goals which go beyond biological fulfillment. Yet our sexist society still maintains this anachronistic, predetermined channeling of woman's creativity and contribution to itself.

The contemporary socialization of our children reflects our heritage of sexism and helps insure that it will remain for at least a few more generations. Little girls begin life differing slightly from little boys, both socially and psychologically. Very quickly, however, we begin our systematic treatment — according to sex. From pink blankets to dresses and dolls to lipstick and curlers, we tell girls that they are female and that their primary trait is, or should be, feminity. They must *learn* to think and behave as a woman, and this concept more than any other will dramatically affect their whole personality. It has been suggested that even our techniques of discipline for children are determined by what sex they happen to be. Girls are disciplined by "love oriented" techniques and boys by more authoritarian methods. We expect and reinforce a different kind of behavior from girls than we do from boys. Boys are allowed more exploratory freedom and are encouraged to be active and aggressive. We all know the phrase "boys will be boys." Girls are praised for being quiet, polite, and "acting like little ladies." They are more sheltered than boys. Their morality, respectability and social graces are more important than assertiveness, independence and individuality.

It seems, in light of this artificially induced state of differences between the sexes that we should be extremely reluctant to make any broad generalizations as to the "innate" nature of women. Yet, we still persist in assigning persons to roles, work and personality by sex. Daniel Brown, in evaluating the development of sex roles, notes "Preschool children as a group become fully aware of the fact that the world is divided into two groups of people and that, depending on whether one belongs to one group or another, different behavior patterns are expected accordingly."[1]

Research has yet to uncover the irreducible sexual elements of personality. Nonetheless, many aspects of psychology, sociology and an-

thropology attempt to define personality and role by sex. Beginning with Freud and continuing through his influence on modern psychology, women have been defined by their sexual and reproductive systems. Freud's view on the nature of woman is exposed in one of his letters: ". . .Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm and sweetness . . . The position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife."[2] Today, even famous psychologist Erik Erikson subscribes to a similar belief. He states that women are controlled by their physiology. Their "somatic design harbors an 'inner space' destined to bear offspring of chosen men and with it a biological, psychological, and ethical commitment to take care of human infancy."[3] This type of psychological utterance does not seem to be based on experimental research, but on observation. The purpose of observation is obtaining a hypothesis, but it does not alone produce scientific evidence supporting those hypotheses. The variables of social context and socialization must be more carefully considered before psychology as a science has anything to say about an "innate" nature of woman or her roles. Until then, psychologists will tend to reiterate and reinforce social biases in true, conservative fashion.

The general conservatism of the fields of sociology and anthropology have also contributed to sexism, although there have been notable exceptions. Traditional writings on marriage and family have almost invariably used sex as a determinant to categorize roles in these institutions. In a book called *The Social Context of Marriage,* J. Richard Udry says, "This is not a recommendation for the abolition of sex-role differences, but the recognition of them for what they are — possible conveniences and possible efficiencies, but above all, basic values around which a substantial part of American behavior is oriented."[4] Much anthropological research says, essentially, the same thing. This is reflected in a statement made by Margaret Mead. "Through the ages, women's lives have centered about their sex role . . . Where men have to learn to want to be fathers, girls are committed by every cell in their bodies to a more engrossing and time-consuming role."[5] The pillar of support here has also been observation. Since role is determined by sex in primate and in many primitive societies, is it assumed that this will and should continue to exist in the future?

All of these rationales for continuing sexist division in our society do not take into consideration the drastically changed social conditions under which we live. I do not believe that we can continue to live in a sexist society. This simplistic sexual division of roles and tasks is no longer efficient or in our best interest. We need as our goal a humanistic rather than a sexist society. We are facing such a multitude of problems — racism, ecology, war and militarism, student protest — that seem to be insurmountable with our present *man*power, that we need to use *all* of our human resources efficiently. We need all the help we can get, according to competence, genius, inspiration and willingness. And these qualities do

not happen to be sex-linked, passed down from father to son.

And it can no longer be assumed that women's only contribution to the world will be in producing and raising children. This would only be adding to our environmental problems. We cannot continue to populate our earth in the same enthusiastic way that we have done in the past. According to Dr. Paul Ehrlich, Professor of Biology at Stanford University, our present population will double in 35 years if we do this.[6] We simply cannot afford for all women to have children, if we wish to provide human, livable conditions for our children that we *do* produce. Thus, we can no longer allow motherhood to be the major occupation of all or even most women. They are going to need other means of fulfillment, unbarred by the restrictions and life-channeling dating back to a time when motherhood *was* the major occupation for women.

We also need to consider the inhumane effects of this sexist society on individual women. In the stereotyping, expectance and acceptance of role playing, the unique aspects of the individual are not encouraged at the expense of discouraging or minimizing her sex role. The traditional "feminity" concept straightjackets human lives. It asks women to be emotionally supportive in their relationships with men, while the traditional "masculine" concept will not allow reciprocal action.

Every human being should be allowed by society to develop and to choose goals in accordance with personality, competence and interest, rather than sex. "Masculine" personalities and "feminine" personalities are fragmented personalities. We need a reevaluation of sex-role traits, determining if they are desirable *human* traits. If they are, then they should be equally valuable traits to both sexes. We are finally beginning to realize that as our society and culture become more complex, so do our human needs become more complex. Human beings have needs other than those biologically designated. In addition to the need for food, shelter and reproduction, people have growth needs, needs to create and needs to be involved in life outside of the private realm of home. It is only human that women have the opportunity to meet these needs and to discover and respond to themselves as individuals, freed from the barriers that today can only do harm to themselves and their society.

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1. Daniel Brown, "Sex Role Development in a Changing Culture," **Psychology Bulletin**, Vol. 55 (1958), 233(b).
2. Ernest Jones, **The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud**, New York, 1953, Vol. I, p. 176.
3. Erik Erikson, "Inner and Outer Space: Reflections on Womanhood," **Deadalus**, Vol. 93 (1964), 582-606.
4. J. Richard Udry, **The Social Context of Marriage**, Philadelphia, 1966, p. 52.
5. Margaret Mead in an introduction to **Women: The Variety and Meaning of Their Sexual Experience**, edited by A. M. Krich, New York, 1953, p. 9.
6. Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich, **The Population Bomb**, New York, 1968, p. 214.

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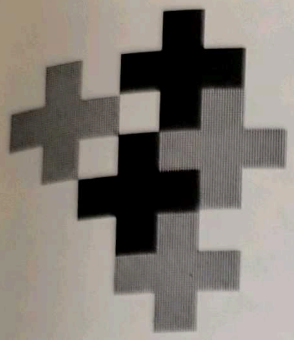


Polygamy Among Converts in East India

Maurice L. Draper

Monogamy is the marriage doctrine of the Reorganized Church, and we know of no one who is trying to change that doctrinal position.

Is there any unusual significance about the timing of an action now identified as Conference Resolution 1021? It was adopted on April 8, 1960.

Whereas, (1) The term "World" is more meaningful and descriptive in our world-wide evangel than the term 'General' in reference to World Conference, World Church Headquarters, etc., and

(2) There are no legal problems or implications involved in making such a change; therefore be it

Resolved, That we encourage the use of the term 'World' instead of 'General' in reference to World Conference, World Church Headquarters, etc.

During the decade of the 1960's world evangelistic opportunities have become more numerous and dramatically varied than ever before in our history. Early Restoration evangelism outside the United States was directed to Great Britain and to a lesser extent to continental Europe. Extension toward Australia also took us, by accident, into Tahiti and the Tuamotuan Islands. Except for the Polynesian development *every contact was with cultures or nations with which Americans already had a great deal in common.*

What has since happened in the Reorganization was determined almost entirely by those early contacts, which turned out to be a kind of limiting boundary beyond which we had neither the means nor the disposition to go. But this situation has now dramatically changed. In the 1960's the church found herself responding to invitations from people in a number of non-Christian or under-developed cultures. It is noteworthy that in these places our testimony appears to be more effective than in the more familiar cultures. Measured by baptisms *and* by the degree of observable change in the values and life-style of the people, our most successful evangelism today is in Nigeria, Haiti, India, and the Philippine Islands. Good things are happening in the Orient and in Latin America as well.

As church leaders we find ourselves today in a most challenging situation. Some of the problems which now confront us are very complex and have no easy solutions. The whole world is in turmoil. From all sides we hear cries for help. Emerging nations are striving to find a place for

themselves in the community of nations. World powers are painfully reassessing their relationships, roles, and responsibilities in the midst of a rapidly changing world culture. Religious groups are challenged by questions covering the whole range of life and experience. And the questioners are not satisfied with the usual answers.

Under such circumstances we are reminded of the "great commission" to "Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:18, 19)

Again, it is clear that the real question before us is whether or not we will truly be a world church. If we are to go to all nations, or as Mark puts it, to "preach the gospel to every creature," we shall repeatedly find a vast variety of conditions, situations, and problems. During the past ten years our work has officially opened in twelve new nations or dependencies: Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Fiji, New Caledonia, Nigeria, Philippine Islands, Japan, Ryukyu Islands, Korea, India, and Haiti. In addition to these, as already noted, we have been committed for many years to work in the established nations of Europe, Australasia, and some of the Pacific Islands. Each of these places has its own peculiarities and problems. It is necessary for the missionaries to bear their testimonies under a variety of circumstances and seek for divine wisdom to share the gospel in ways which are truly redemptive.

A number of factors come to our attention when we endeavor to do this. For years our chief concern was related to language problems. It was necessary to produce the Restoration scriptures in various national languages and to support the ministries of evangelism and zionic life with tracts, educational texts, and pastoral resources. Even this relatively simple task has challenged us beyond our resources and still demands greater effort. But progress is being made as new literature appears in the European, Polynesian, Oriental, and Indian languages.

In a day of expansion into new fields the need for the social ministries of the gospel takes on new forms and greater variety. These are illustrated by the work of health teams which regularly visit Haiti, the clinic at Makok in Korea, the educational and health programs in East India, the vocational and rehabilitative school in Tahiti, and a variety of programs in local stakes, districts, and branches. A growing number of the Saints are finding opportunities in these programs for deeply satisfying service to their fellowmen in the spirit of Christ.

The task of supplying the variety of resources for these ministries is a formidable one. Such resources include literature, medicines and health supplies, buildings, technical equipment, vehicles, etc. But the most important resource of all is people — dedicated, trained, insightful, responsible people. We rejoice that more and more such people are sharing in the sense of divine call to incarnational ministries.

Polygamy As A Problem in Evangelism

Our attention was first directed toward the possibility of polygamy appearing as a problem in evangelism when we were exploring the situation in Nigeria in the early 1960's. At that time we questioned what our attitude should be toward baptismal candidates from the Moslem sectors of Nigeria, involved in polygamy prior to their exposure to the gospel. I was among those who thought it wise to discuss this issue with the Saints when it seemed appropriate to do so, as a check on our own evaluations and reactions. Such discussions were held with several gatherings of the Saints and priesthood members. These were informal, for no real issue had yet arisen and no firm decision had yet to be made. In my own case, at least, the question was related to a hypothetical possibility in Nigeria. The actual situation in India had not yet come to our notice.

It was of great interest to me to observe that the advice, almost without exception, was that baptism should not be denied, that existing marriage covenants should be honored, that additional plural unions among church members should lead to expulsion, and that monogamy should be the required rule for all those presently so married or who were unmarried at the time the gospel testimony reached them.

Apostles Cole and Neff also report that the matter has been discussed openly and on several occasions. It was the basis of public discussion at the Deer Park and Maine reunions by Apostle Neff in 1967. It was discussed the same summer by Apostle Cole in Alaska. Letters have been freely addressed to inquirers when their questions have been received.

Concern with polygamy as a public issue has declined over the years, and the people outside our church generally today show less interest in the theological aspects of the historic question than in an earlier day. During the past decade, however, the characteristics of emerging nations have posed problems for the whole world. Among other questions the matter of plural marriage has once more been thrust upon us as a live issue. We have not taken the initiative on this. We are distressed that it is a problem anywhere in the world. But we cannot respond to the calls for ministry which have been directed to us, we believe by the operations of the Holy Spirit, without being confronted with the fact that the issue exists.

The Situation in India

In the early part of 1967, a man with two wives walked into the water in India pleading for baptism. The apostle had to physically resist the pleading convert, whose testimony earlier in the day had evidenced his response to the gospel witness. But the apostle refused the baptism. He then brought the question before the Council of Twelve in its March, 1967, sessions. At that time, after soul-searching and prayerful consideration, the Council agreed on the following:

Those marriage covenants in the Sora Tribes in India made prior to conversion should be honored. All those who are baptized should not subsequently enter into any further marriage covenants beyond one wife, according to the pattern which the church accepts.

At the present time this action applies only to the Sora Tribes in India. Every special problem requires its own particular solution. But in every case the solution to problems of this kind must stand on the principle that the teaching of monogamy is the base line of marriage instruction and practice of the church and that actions such as taken by the Twelve in this case represent efforts to deal with problems and not a modification of doctrine.

Our Marriage Doctrine

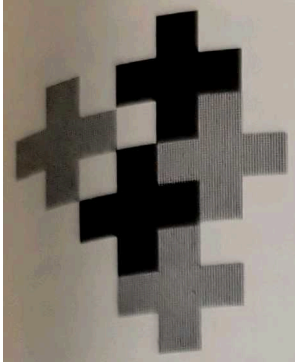
The Reorganized Church has taken note of the need for strengthening our marriage standards from time to time. Specific attention was given to this in 1968 with the publication of a little book called *Marriage in the Restoration*. It quotes Doctrine and Covenants 49:3 in which monogamy is enjoined as the divine law. It reviews the 1835 action in which the statement now in the Doctrine and Covenants as Section 111 was adopted. It quotes the 1866 resolution and others on the matter of marital standards in which the Christian ideal is sustained as life-long monogamy. It quotes the 1950 report of the First Presidency dealing with marriage standards. Its major purpose was the analysis of the Conference action in 1962 which states, among other things, that "marriage is intended to be a life-long covenant between one man and one woman." This publication, in 1968, is a firm restatement of our basic doctrine of monogamy. I cannot speak for the other members of the First Presidency as to the number of occasions on which their public utterances in sermons and classes have affirmed these principles. But I know the men, and I know that they affirm the principle of monogamy, and I have not the slightest hesitation in speaking for them as well as myself as to the principle.

Let it also be noted that the resolution on standards of conduct, prepared by the Presidency and adopted by the 1970 Conference in response to a problem posed by the Australia Mission and unresolved in 1968, states the following: "That the conduct of the Saints of all ages in relations between the sexes should be controlled by the principle in the marriage covenant that both spouses will keep themselves wholly for each other, and from all others during their lives."

This statement is based on Doctrine and Covenants 111 which enjoins monogamy, and yet it is part of the very document which is sometimes quoted as supporting a doctrinal change toward the support of polygamy!

The record is clear, and our doctrinal position has been reaffirmed as recently as 1968 and 1970 by the First Presidency. Monogamy is the marriage doctrine of the Reorganized Church, and we know of no one who is trying to change that doctrinal position.

Maurice L. Draper has been a member of the First Presidency of the RLDS Church since 1958.



You Are Involved with Polygamy

Verne Deskin

A grievous error has been made in baptizing men and women who are directly involved in polygamy; all those involved and who approved or who otherwise participated in such baptisms ought to humbly apologize to the church people and ask their forgiveness.

You are involved with polygamy. From a very recent communication from the highest church officers, I submit a few quotations. The communication was in answer to the question, "Is it true that we are baptizing polygamists in India?" Here is their answer: "The answer to that question is yes. We have baptized four families involving four men and eight women who are polygamists."

Here is another part of the official statement: "When these families give evidence that they are truly converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and believe in and fully support the doctrine of monogamy as well as those other doctrines of Christianity important to Christian principles of life, they are acceptable for baptism with the understanding that they will work with the church to establish their homes in Christian patterns and with mutual respect and love for each other."

Other statements include the following: "Any person who is a member of the church will be expelled if he enters into polygamous marriage or teaches polygamy as an accepted pattern of marriage," and "It will be understood therefore that the church does not condone, accept, or approve polygamy by its baptism of some who are polygamists."

Now let us see whether the above expressed official statement harmonizes with scripture. A few quotations will suffice:

"And again, every person who belongeth to this church of Christ shall observe to keep all the commandments and covenants of the church." (*Doctrine and Covenants* 42:21a)

"President W. W. Phelps then read an article on marriage, which was accepted and adopted, and ordered to be printed in said book, (The Book of Doctrine and Covenants) by a unanimous vote." (*Doctrine and Covenants* 108A, 13)

"Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the

crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again." (*Doctrine and Covenants* 111, 4b)

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20, 14; Mosiah 7, 121)

Many of the commandments of God and Christ teach us regarding the related duties and the beauties of monogamous marriage. To those commandments we are committed by the very fact of our voluntary acceptance of the obligations of membership in the body of Christ.

Members of the First Presidency and certain members of the Council of Twelve Apostles, although bound by the same commitments, have elected to participate in, and encourage, and defend the baptisms of a dozen (at least) persons who are non-monogamous. And that could be just a beginning. It is quite strange, although under the circumstances to be expected, that the reports of such baptisms are just now beginning to be available to the membership of the church. One Apostle admits that his Council discussed (and he says they approved — approval was denied by others) such baptisms as early as March of 1967. The Presidency said that they had discussed the matter over a period of five or six years. Three World Conferences have passed and over forty issues of the Herald published without any reports of such doings to the church membership.

It is now an admitted fact that contrary to prophetic and doctrinal prohibitions our leaders say that polygamists " . . . are acceptable for baptism . . .," and the prime requirement is that they " . . . believe in and fully support the doctrine of monogamy . . ." Just who would honor the testimony of a polygamist who said that he believed in and fully supported the doctrine of monogamy? I know of very few outside of the Auditorium. It is comparable to electing an unrepentant mobster as sheriff of our home county. After participating in the baptism of twelve polygamists these church officials say, "It will be understood, therefore, that the church does not condone, accept, or approve polygamy by its baptism of some who are polygamists." If we knowingly baptized unrepentant thieves, adulterers, rapists, murderers, etc., do you think that we would not be condoning, accepting, and approving those sins, especially if these persons continue in their evil doings? Are there not respectable limits to our pollution of the Body of Christ? Study *Doctrine and Covenants 42.*

Effective teaching and real believing are contained in the things that we do rather than in our confessions or professions of what we believe. Variations between our saying and our doing result in serious disturbance to ourselves and to all who may observe us. Our leaders have broken faith with all those who believe that God has never given an idle commandment. Doctrines of considerable moment to our members are deliberately ignored and violated, all without common consent or even a report of same until years after the fact. Proceeding under such secrecy

some Apostles and other high officers got themselves into a sinful mess, and upon being besieged by numbers of advised and loyal members they are finding it difficult to discover a clean shirt to wear. Their defense is to accept the baptized polygamists under an unreal and unconvincing commitment to favor monogamy. Then in the same breath they profess to hold tightly to that violated doctrine. They seem to have failed to learn that at the same time and in the same place there cannot be darkness and light.

Let me now turn to a more positive approach to the problem and submit some viewpoints for your careful evaluations and judgments. From official correspondence I am advised that the problem arises in relation to the question whether to require the polygamist to release his excess wives and her children. One suggestion is that such wives could remain in the same home under his support but without normal marriage relations. Another is that they would be asked to leave the home and fend for themselves and family. Another proposes that the church could offer to support them. Another possibility, though this was not suggested, is that they simply remain as they are. In one instance it is stated that the community would reject the discarded wives and that their only means of livelihood would be in prostitution. Now it will be obvious to you that neither situation solves any problems. And ALL of the first three would result in as serious a disqualification for membership in the church as the last. So nothing is accomplished. And all are unrighteous. There should and could be serious community criticism of the church if such marriages are so disturbed since they are under local customs entirely acceptable.

Let me say that no hatred or even disrespect is directed toward the polygamist person, and that it is alone the sin that is to be condemned. In fact, I have only kindliness and sympathy for all of them. These sins would only be compounded if the polygamist were to cast any wife aside. One sin cannot erase any other sin, so, as far as acceptability as a member of the church, the polygamist can hardly qualify. Where, then, does the problem find its solution? To me it is very simple. We need to very kindly and firmly reject the polygamist's request for baptism. After all is said, that is the best thing we can do *for him*. Community customs which have encouraged his polygamy have also made it difficult for him to extricate himself. And under the gospel culture his repentance on the polygamy count would result in his conviction on the abandonment count; therefore, he is in no position to repent. It is my understanding that repentance is the prime requisite before baptism. No priesthood member is privileged to lift and nullify any of our long accepted doctrinal requirements, or to substitute tribal customs for gospel principles. Gems of God's wisdom are not to be traded for pagan practices. Eventually the polygamist will discover that his fault seriously affects his salvation. Will he not then suffer considerable anguish in learning that his baptism has

committed him to a gospel law that he cannot observe nor extricate himself from short of surrendering membership?

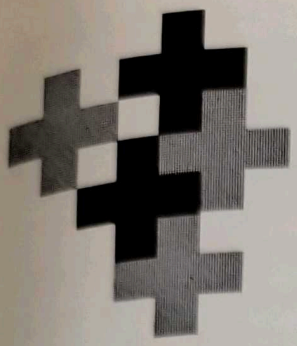
Brotherliness, helpfulness, kindly understanding, and sincere ministry ought to be extended to these people, but baptism invokes an entirely different factor.

Two general church officers have promised shortly to make some statement to the membership dealing with this subject. I have previously written the two highest quorums of the church suggesting in substance that such statement ought to frankly and plainly say the following:

1. That a grievous error has been made in baptizing men and women who are directly involved in polygamy.
2. That all those involved (naming them) and who approved or who otherwise participated in such baptisms humbly apologize to the church people and ask their forgiveness.
3. That such baptisms will in no wise be defended.
4. That vital elements of the gospel culture related to marriage are important and are commended to all of the church people.
5. That in the event any church official involved who favored that policy now in question refuses to humbly apologize and ask forgiveness, his resignation should be requested.
6. That the membership be assured that there will be no further departures from doctrine and faith by church leaders; and that our leaders will restore to the membership their lawful prerogatives in the democratic process.

If the statement prepared by and submitted by Apostle Cole represents that promised official statement to the membership (as partly quoted in the early portion of this article) then it meets but one of the above suggestions, and that is so tied in with the balance of the statement as to render it ineffective. Since the statement was distributed through the Presidency's office, I am extremely fearful that the battle is now joined. The fact of our membership makes it encumbent upon every concerned Reorganized Latter Day Saint to study all phases of this problem, then fearlessly express himself whether he be for or against baptism of any person directly involved in polygamy.

Verne Deskin, a retired banker and member of the Iowa bar, is a member of the Lamoni Stake High Council.



Sources for Studies in the Life of Joseph Smith III

Daniel T. Muir

Consistently expressed throughout Joseph Smith's writing is the firm belief in the right of the individual to think for himself as long as such thoughts are presented as personal views.

Joseph Smith III (who shall be referred to as Joseph Smith in this essay) was president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for fifty-four years. Under his leadership the church grew from a few small branches of Latter Day Saints dissatisfied with any existing faction of Mormonism to a body of over seventy-three thousand members throughout the United States and Canada, with missions in Europe, Australia, and the Society Islands. During this time the church set its doctrinal course and established educational, health, and welfare institutions. It is questionable whether the "new organization" of Latter Day Saints would have ever become more than a dissenting sect of a few thousand members without the association of Joseph Smith. Yet no major study has been done of the life and leadership of the man. This article shall describe major primary sources available in the RLDS Department of History for studying the life and administration of Joseph Smith.

Diaries

Joseph Smith kept diaries over a period of fifty years. Unfortunately for the researcher, they do not contain ideas, reflections, impressions, or thoughts concerning the events of the day's entry. Rather they are basically account books of his travels and expenses. The chief value in them would be a documentation of where he was at a given time, yet they are of limited value even from this standpoint. He would often go for several days without making an entry. Therefore, while an entry could substantiate his presence in a given place at a given time, or preclude his being there by notations showing otherwise, in many instances the books will be of no practical use to the scholar.

The financial entries in the diaries do illustrate the fact that Joseph Smith was a frugal man who kept a careful record of his expenses, such as the notation of 3 cents for paper. The records also contain reflections of the emotional and personal events in his life such as September 1859,

when he wrote on the twenty-sixth, "At home Doctor tells us we must lose Eva" (his daughter), and then on the thirtieth, "At Home All day evening little Eva dying Oh: how sorrowful 9 oclock Eva dead." On a more pleasant note he wrote November 12, 1869, "Was married today to Miss Bertha Madison by Elder Elijah Banta at the house of Bishop I L Rogers."

While one might hope for more consistent entries containing deeper content, the diaries should not be overlooked. Studies of differing topics could benefit from comments such as this one of January 26, 1867, "Was at work in office wrote several letters. got very tired Read letter from S B H Smith asking recommend for the governorship of Utah. Dined at Bro Sheens with wife."

The diaries of Joseph Smith should be consulted by the student doing research into his life. While they may seldom turn up completely new information, they will often give primary documentation of his activities. Research in the diaries requires patience since they are difficult to scan for key words, names, locations, etc. The pages are narrow and the entries often appear to have been made while the author held the book on his lap, resulting in handwriting that is difficult to read. Further, many of the entries are in pencil which has become smudged over the years.

Memoirs

Late in life Joseph Smith began work on his memoirs, doing most of the work in his last two years. While the aging churchman had commenced the project earlier, little progress was made until Israel Alexander Smith became his father's secretary in 1913. At this time Joseph Smith was totally blind and largely retired from administrative work.

As Israel Smith began his work he would go through Joseph's diary and church publications of a given year. After finding out where Joseph Smith had been, in what meetings and activities he had participated, and the major events in the church that year, he would review these items with his father. Generally a few days later Joseph Smith would say he was ready to discuss a given year and would begin dictating. The secretary recorded the dictation in Pitman shorthand combined with his own notation system. This copy was then read to the senior Smith for his verification and approval.[1]

At what time the notes of Israel A. Smith were typed has not been determined. In 1927, Mary Audentia Smith Anderson began editing a typed manuscript, which she completed in 1933.[2] Mrs. Anderson did considerable editing of the material dictated by her father. While it appears that she did not delete much content, she did alter to a large extent the grammatical construction and at times added modifying phrases. The *Saints' Herald* began publication of the Memoirs of Joseph Smith III as edited by Audentia Anderson in November 1934, which series continued through July 1937.

Comparing the manuscript on which Mrs. Anderson worked with the printed version, it is evident that there was an additional editorial step between the two, but it is not presently known how or by whom it was *accomplished*. Perhaps such emendations were done on proof sheets.

Joseph Smith's memoirs are an invaluable source for the study of Latter Day Saintism between 1845 and 1910. "Young Joseph" was eleven and one-half when his father and uncle, the president and patriarch of the church, were killed, so his memories of the church under its founder were limited. He did have, however, quite vivid recollections of the events and persons involved in Nauvoo's life shortly thereafter. It is doubtful if the developments related and personalities described concerning Nauvoo after the LDS exodus are recorded elsewhere.

Joseph Smith covered the full range of his life's activities in his memoirs. Here one can read of his courting days, establishing a home, and even of in-law difficulties. Further detailed is his quandary over whether he should associate himself with the church started by his father, and if so, in what way. One can read of his travels: to Utah and interviews with women who claimed to have been his father's plural wives; to Canada, England, Hawaii; and to Washington, D. C. to testify in the Reed Smoot case before the United States Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Personalities associated with Joseph Smith are described, as are the various conferences in which he was involved. He was not one to remember only the pleasant moments, as illustrated by his account of the 1907 General Conference during which his brother Alexander Hale Smith accused him of neglect of duty. Also, the memoirs reflect the sorrow of a man who buried two wives and six children, including his two oldest sons. This was particularly hard, he recalled, for one who attached great hopes to his first born son.

The memoirs of Joseph Smith are a must for students of this field. The thorough scholar would want to examine Mrs. Anderson's manuscrift also. It would be hoped that sometime Israel Smith's short-hand notes could be transcribed to determine if preliminary editing had been done before the work was given to Mrs. Anderson.

The book *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* is available from Herald Publishing House. A condensation of his published memoirs, it consists of about one-third of the materials published in the Saints' Herald in the 1930's. The student should, however, make every effort to secure access to the complete work. A detailed index of the memoirs which will greatly facilitate research is being prepared by the Department of History.

Letters

Probably the most significant archival holding of the Department of History, other than the manuscripts of the *Book of Mormon* and Joseph Smith, Jr.'s "New Translation" of the Bible, are the letters of Joseph

Smith III. The Department, as of May 1970, had cataloged by addressee and date one thousand five hundred forty-one letters and documents originating with Joseph Smith. In addition, there are one thousand four hundred seventy-five pages of letters written by him in the 1880's and 1890's which are being processed, and will become available for research as they are cataloged. These range from one to twenty-five pages in length. The Department also has fifty-two letters addressed to Smith.

The letters of Joseph Smith would provide rich source material for studies of varying nature. The student of church administration would want to consult the letters to William W. Blair, counselor in the presidency, to study the problems there discussed and learn the president's thinking. Such a study should also include letters to various apostles to see how the questions of administrative rights and authority were handled. Anyone writing a history of the Herald Publishing House would need to read the many letters written when Joseph Smith was the working editor and manager of the church press, which includes correspondence with members of the Board of Publication. A history of the church's settlement of Lamoni, Iowa would be incomplete without including letters to the Committee on Removal.

Joseph Smith's letters provide insights to church life, the questions confronted, and problems faced by its members in the church's youth and adolescence. That the body was small and intimate is evident from the fact that the membership wrote directly to President Smith with their problems and concerns. He handled questions such as how to deal with a non-member husband who says he'll quit drinking if the wife will cease her church activities,[3] why do saints receive physical afflictions,[4] and the proper method of annointing a person during the rite of administration for the sick.[5] To gain perspective on the purpose of the "Word of Wisdom", one ought to read his letter of February 22, 1878, to Joseph Lampert. Persons studying the name of the church or those unduly aroused by being called Mormons, might benefit from the letter signed "Joseph Smith, Presiding Elder, Reorganized Mormon Church."[6] Throughout his years of letter-writing Joseph Smith stated over and over his views on polygamy and whether he thought that his father had practiced that form of marriage.

The letters of Joseph Smith reflect not only church life during his time but also the beginnings of later developments. A study of Frederick Madison Smith as an administrator ought to include the letter from President Smith to his son Israel, dated September 11, 1912, as well as the letter received by the president from Apostle Heman C. Smith, dated January 28, 1909. The latter should also be examined by anyone considering the relationship between revelatory documents of the church's prophet and the contemporary setting.

Consistently expressed throughout Joseph Smith's writing is the firm belief in the right of the individual to think for himself as long as such

thoughts are presented as personal views. Indeed, he often wrote against presenting as church doctrine that which had not been officially adopted by the church.

Joseph Smith the family man vividly comes to life in his letters, which are often signed Pater Familias. There is admonition to a son attempting to make it on his own in the business world,[7] as well as advice for buying a house in Lamoni.[8] There is counsel to a newly married daughter suffering from homesickness in a strange city,[9] and expressed joy upon the arrival of a grandson bearing his name.[10] There is advice to a son not to invest in a flying machine,[11] and a detailed request to a son-in-law to ship two or three barrels of apples![12] Joseph Smith's keen interest in politics and his life long devotion to the Republican Party are prominently displayed, particularly after a son began studying law and became involved in Iowa politics. The family letters reflect the problems of old age and failing health, such as the comment, "I think I am improving, but it is very slow; and at times I am half discourageed(sic),and wonder which it will be, I wear the neuralgia out or the neuralgia wear me out."[13] Joseph Smith's rich sense of humor was often displayed, as in the instance when he was considering moving from Lamoni, Iowa to Independence, Missouri and wrote, "Some folks here say they cannot live without me here; guess it will be a good way to reduce population in the 'congested district,' Eh!"[14]

There are two basic forms in which Joseph Smith's letters are found: originals preserved by the recipient and office copies recorded in letter-press books. Most of the letters up until mid-1906 are in Smith's own handwriting. From that time on, he started using a typewriter, and later dictated to a secretary. Many of the typed letters bear a rubber stamp of his signature. Those dealing with church affairs tend to have been written during the first forty or so years of his administration. The bulk of his family letters come after that, when his children were away from home.

At present there is no subject index to Joseph Smith's letters. With the date and name index, however, the researcher can often get to a specific topic by knowing the time at which it was prominent and the individuals involved.

Saints' Heralds

With the May 1, 1865 issue, Joseph Smith became editor of the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* and maintained that position until his death in 1914. For most of that time he was the managing editor of the journal, although he did have various assistant and associate editors through the years. After his move to Independence from Lamoni in 1906, he served more as a contributing editor. During the forty-nine years of his editorship, Joseph Smith contributed voluminously to the pages of the *Herald*. Through editorials he addressed the church officially and through his columns he spoke in a more personal manner, keeping the church informed of his travels and personal reflections. In August 1865,

he began a column, "Pleasant Chat," which appears to have ended in December 1869. He did, however, continue to write in this less formal style without using the column name. The Herald also ran a "Query Column" which, while unsigned, was probably edited by Joseph Smith. In it were answered such questions as: should a person be baptized up-stream, down-stream or cross-stream;[15] how should we address fellow church members;[16] as well as more weighty doctrinal inquiries.

The above comprises the major writings of Joseph Smith, but by no means includes all. Additional materials can be found in statements to the General Conferences and published Sermon Supplements of the *Saints' Herald*. The scholar should also peruse other contemporary church periodicals. There are unknown quantities of his letters in the hands of individuals. The Department of History would be happy to accept such documents, give them care to insure preservation, and make them available for study.

While there is still much indexing and cataloging to be done by the RLDS Department of History, there is at present a large resource of primary material on the life and leadership of Joseph Smith (1832-1914). By necessity much of it would have to be used in Independence, Missouri in the church archives. Other libraries do have the *Saints' Herald* which includes the published memoirs as well as editorial writings. A new master microfilm of the *Herald* is now being produced, which will make a quality edition of that periodical available to any library wishing to purchase one.

Much scholarly research has recently been focused on the founding and formative years of Latter Day Saintism. The same area of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is ripe for similar studies. The papers and published writings of Joseph Smith should make a major contribution to understanding this area of our past.

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1. Smith, Israel A. "My Father's Last Years," **Saints' Herald**, Vol. 81 (November 6, 1834), pp. 1409, 1410, 1426.
2. Anderson, Mary Audentia Smith. "Concerning My Father's Memoirs," **Saints' Herald**, Vol. 81 (November 6, 1834), pp. 1412, 1425, 1426.
3. A.L.S.* Joseph Smith to Ellen A. Johnston, December 10, 1880. Located in Joseph Smith Letterbook 3, pp. 233-234. Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence. All letters of Joseph Smith cited in this article are located in the Department of History and used by permission of Richard P. Howard, Director.
4. A.L.S. Joseph Smith to Sarah Ridgers, December 8, 1877. Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, pp. 253-254.
5. A.L.S. Joseph Smith to Stephen H. Morse, May 10, 1879. Joseph Smith Letterbook 2, p. 191.
6. A.L.S. Joseph Smith to **Evening Journal**, May 2, 1880. Joseph Smith Letterbook 3, p. 21.
7. A.L.S. Joseph Smith to Israel A. Smith, December 26, 1898.

8. L. (typed, signature stamp) Joseph Smith to Israel A. Smith, June 1, 1909.
9 A.L.S. Joseph Smith to Lucy Y. Lysinger, August 22, 1906.
10. L. (typed, signature stamp) Joseph Smith to I. A. Smith Sep.11, 1912.
11. L. (typed, signature stamp) Joseph Smith to Israel A. Smith January 3, 1909.
12. L. (typed, signature stamp) Joseph Smith to Jess M. Lysinger Oct. 19, 1909.
13. L. (typed, name typed) Joseph Smith to Israel A. Smith Oct. 11, 1906.
14. A.L.S. Joseph Smith to Israel A. Smith July 2, 1906.
15. **Saints' Herald**, Vol. 14 (August 1, 1868), p. 42.
16. **Saints' Herald** Vol. 16 (Oct. 15, 1869), p. 242.

* The letters A.L.S. stand for Autograph Letter Signed, indicating an Autograph Letter (in the author's handwriting), which bears his signature. The simple L. indicates a Letter as opposed to some other document.

The following tables showing the breakdown of Joseph Smith's letters and diaries in the Department of History may be helpful for students considering possible research in this area.

Letters

Through 1869: Written by Joseph Smith — 12; Received by Joseph Smith — 19.
1870-1879: Written — 614; Received — 10.
1880-1889: Written — 377, plus 336 pages not yet cataloged; Received — 9.
1890-1899: Written — 156, plus 1139 pages not yet cataloged; Received — 3.
1900-1909: Written — 249; Received — 7.
1910-1914: Written — 133; Received — 4.

Diaries

1859-1861, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1908.

Daniel T. Muir, a graduate student in history at the University of Connecticut, worked in the Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri, 1966-1970.

Ther. THURS. JUNE 25, 1903 Wea.

Reached Southampton at about 10, A. M. Train waiting for London, arrived in the city about 1.30. ~~Met J. J. Sheldon~~ Met J. W. Rushton on the dock. Met J. J. Sheldon at Waterloo and were at his home 198 Corporation St W. Ham, and had Lunch, met the Saints in their church Bro I. Bradshaw Had a reception Met J. D. Howells & others

13 Ther. FRI. JUNE 26, 1903 Wea.

Visited in London saw Westminster abbey, Saw King Ed. in Procession Bro J. D. Howells & J. W. Rushton J. J. Sheldon & Bro J. Hamilton at a Vegetarian Restaurant Trafalgar Sq and other places. Had meeting at night, I spoke Westminster Hall and St Pauls Cathedrae

JOSEPH SMITH DIARIES

COURAGE/100

Used by permission. Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

October 18, 1911.

— 7 — 1865

The sight was a very singular one, to me. It was practically a putting away the affairs of human life with a view to devoting myself wholly to matters of religion. It seemed to me then as it does now, that the controversy was a sort of triangular affair, The Reorganization, with myself, as one of the corners, the secular philosophy of religious life and the claims of the churches and the outside world another, and the church in Utah the third. It was obvious that it would be my duty, in association with my brethren, to defend the Bible from the attacks of those who were called unbelieving or infidels, on the one part, and against the almost fanatical view, that every portion of the Bible was the result of direct inspiration and that the cannon of scripture was full. Our attitude of belief in the doctrine of present and direct revelation did bring us into contact with this latter view, in spite of ourselves, and our avowed belief, as a revelation of God's will, and as a guide to human happiness, and the claims of the Church would necessarily force upon us the necessity of defending our faith in the Bible against incredulity, and the attacks of those who not only disbelieved the Bible as a divine record, but also regard it as of only human origin at its best. The position assumed by the Reorganization, it seemed to me demanded that the books of the Church, including the Bible, as they were left intact at the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, as containing no warrant for the establishment of the dogma of plural marriage or its practice; That while we should contend against that dogma and practice, as contrary to and obnoxious to the social institution of society at large, and that the revelations published by the Church and which were in force at the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith should maintain the position of the Bible in regard to these disputed points.

COURAGE/101

THE BOOK OF MORMON

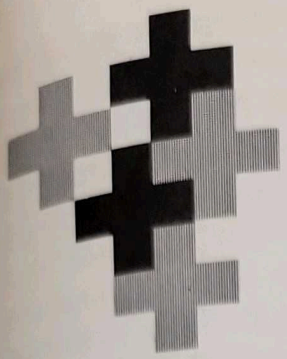
THE FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI.

HIS REIGN AND MINISTRY

Chapter 1.

An account of Lehi and his wife Sariah, and his four sons, being called (beginning at the eldest), Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. The Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the land of Jerusalem, because he prophesieth unto the people concerning their iniquity; and they seek to destroy his life. He taketh three days' journey into the wilderness with his family. Nephi taketh his brethren and returns to the land of Jerusalem after the record of the Jews. The account of their sufferings. They take the daughters of Ishmael to wife. They take their families and depart into the wilderness. Their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness. The course of their travels. They come to the large waters. Nephi's brethren rebelleth against him. He confoundeth them, and buildeth a ship. They call the place Bountiful. They cross the large waters into the promised land, &c. This is according to the account of Nephi; or in other words, I, Nephi wrote this record.

1 ¶I, [1]Nephi, having been born of goodly parent, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days—nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my



The Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon

Clair E. Weldon

The acid test, the ultimate "moment of truth" for the Book of Mormon *comes when a conscientious human being includes and seeks Divinity as a partner in his approach to the book.*

At first glance, the whole *Book of Mormon* story may seem fantastic and incredible: peoples migrating halfway around the world long before the advent of jet planes and short-wave radios; Hebrews, with Near Eastern cultural orientation, founding a society in ancient America to last for a thousand years; Jesus Christ, the resurrected Son of God, who by most standards should have been known only among the Jews in Palestine and by such other persons fortunate enough to receive the New Testament message by later human transmission, appearing personally to the Nephites somewhere in the New World; a people's history, including purported revelatory experiences and divinely-inspired expressions described in an extraordinary language on golden plates hidden for fourteen hundred years; a record disclosed not by ordinary human accidental discovery and scholarly translation but by an "angel from heaven" and by "the power of God"; the whole matter saturated with religious belief in spiritual realities, "divine revelation," and human experiences with persons and powers transcending "normal" human experience.

Respectful, patient understanding is due the persons, including those who may be members of the RLDS Church, who find difficulty in accepting and using the *Book of Mormon* because of its unusual origin and contents, or for whatever reason. Looking at the other side of the coin, certain corresponding responsibilities rest on persons having reservations about the *Book of Mormon.*

A fundamental question about the spectacular nature of the book would be: "Are these things really improbable, or could not God and man have been associated in circumstances of which this book is a reasonably valid report?"

In evaluating the story of the *Book of Mormon,* the crux of the issue would seem to lie in one's view of life and reality. If one is inclined to the

outlook that there is no power or intelligence in the universe higher than ourselves, and that life has no meaning beyond our routine experiences leading to a merciful utter extinction at death, then he might wish to dismiss the *Book of Mormon* story as one more vulnerable example of optimistic human imagination. But if one believes there is intelligence and orderly power in the universe transcending man's experiences, that there is beneficent direction and ultimate purpose in human existence, that there is revelatory communication with divinity, he may well want to keep the door of his mind open to the possibility that the *Book of Mormon* may be an authentic part of this physical and spiritual reality.

We would be unwise to dismiss summarily the *Book of Mormon* testimony because of any articulate but negative view of it expressed to us by anyone because those who believe in and use it are ordinary mortals like ourselves and their advocacy of it may have, from our present possibly telescopic point of view, a weak spot or two; nor should we dismiss it because there may be some facets or points in the matter which may perplex or distress us. If we find problems in accepting the *Book of Mormon* as an authentic gift of God to us, we would be wise to place special emphasis on searching out its positive factors. Like precious gems which are vastly more valuable than the soil or debris which obscures them, we might find that the positive factors in the *Book of Mormon* story greatly outweigh those negative issues which seem never to lack expositors.

There are genuine, affirmative factors supporting the validity of these Christian scriptures from ancient America. The scope and space of this article allows us to mention some of these here only in general outline.

Within the bounds of available information, we can examine the circumstances of the 1823-1830 "coming forth" of the *Book of Mormon*, and the life and character of the persons principally involved in it. This can help us judge whether the *Book of Mormon* is merely a 19th-century product of some "folk genius," fraudulent schemer, visionary mystic or whatever, or that Smith, Cowdery, Whitmer and the many others involved were participants in a genuine revelatory experience with God in the disclosure of a scriptural record from ancient times.

There actually were gold plates, according to the report of fifteen to twenty persons who saw and/or handled the gold plates and saw the inscriptions on them during the two years they were in Smith's custody. Eleven persons left special, solemnly executed statements which clearly indicate their conviction of the existence of the plates as a physical and divinely-supported reality.

Joseph Smith copied down on paper several lines of the characters inscribed by Mormon and Moroni on the plates. The original sheet of this "Anthon Transcript," preserved in the RLDS Church's archives, contains over 200 characters including repetitions. Eighty-five different

ones have been analyzed, in studies much more recent and subject to validation than the famous Martin Harris-Prof. Anthon episode, and by comparison with photographs of Egyptian writings have been shown to be similar to the demotic Egyptian inscriptions. (See Israel A. Smith's 24-page booklet, *The Language of the Book of Mormon.)*

For persons believing in the Bible, comparison between it and the *Book of Mormon* tends to show the two books to be compatible and interrelated, to indicate one authentic Promoter and Revealer standing behind the human descriptions in these accounts written in two widely separated regions of the world.

Scientific studies of ancient America's numerous civilizations offer another "handle" for examination of the *Book of Mormon* story. The book mentions, sometimes in detail, hundreds of major and minor cultural features. If the book is legitimate, some of these ought to have survived identifiably in the Americas, despite the fact that the Nephite culture deteriorated fifteen hundred years ago and the likelihood that its surviving elements (both people and cultural characteristics) became mixed with other peoples and cultures which in turn continued evolving through the centuries. It is highly significant that a long list of cultural characteristics described in the *Book of Mormon* can be verified as similar to features known to have existed among ancient American peoples. Some few points admittedly await further clarification. Scientifically, the cultures described in the *Book of Mormon* could fit into the picture in a number of places in ancient America. This writer makes no claim that anthropology and other scientific disciplines presently "prove" the *Book of Mormon* conclusively to be "true." There are fifty-seven varieties of semantic, emotional, and philosophical "hangups" encumbering the terms "prove" and "true." We do suggest that the balance of circumstantial scientific evidence is tipped toward confirming the plausibility of peoples such as are described in the *Book of Mormon* having actually existed in ancient America.

However valuable external supporting factors may be, the *Book of Mormon* should be expected to stand on its own, speaking for itself. Its lengthy and highly-involved text is wide open to literary detective work. What kind of writing is it? Does it demonstrate different styles of writing from section to section as would befit a compilation? Is it distinct from the known style of Joseph Smith himself? Are there indications of Hebrew thought patterns? Are there generally present, or generally lacking, the subtle discolorations, terms, concepts, and constructions which would appear in even a finely-crafted modern imitation of ancient writing? We suggest that, despite a few items which some would label anachronistic but which are susceptible to reasonable explanation, studies of an internal, literary nature support the book's fundamental framework of origin and authorship.

Perhaps the most important approach to evaluation of the *Book of*

Mormon is simply the direct application of intelligence, especially to the essential subject matter, message and meaning of the book. Do the persons, events and concepts presented in the book make sense logically and theologically? Is it possible, or even probable, that the book is legitimate? It is far too easy to close the door against the *Book of Mormon* because of vocal negative opinions or identification of some problem areas. It is much more demanding to keep the door open by a positive attitude that pursues a general survey, seeks a comprehensive balancing and proper weighting of factors and recognizes the greater value of "I saw it" compared to "I didn't see it." Human intelligence can and should be applied to the *Book of Mormon* by reading, re-reading, reflection, and logical analysis. Proper inspection might require months or years.

If the *Book of Mormon* is possibly what it purports to be, it is entitled to the application of greater resources than we can command by ourselves. We should endeavor to obtain whatever sharpening and expansion of our own intelligence may be available to us from higher power. We refer, of course, to God and his spiritual power which creates, sustains, governs and enlightens all things. The acid test, the ultimate "moment of truth" for the *Book of Mormon* (or anything else in our experience!) comes when a conscientious human being includes and seeks Divinity as a partner in his approach to that book. There are many people who have given the *Book of Mormon* such consideration, characterized by intensive searching for enlightenment from their Creator, who affirm this article's title.

If the book is a gift from God — and I join many others in believing that it is — its main purpose would be that of its Giver: to assist in understanding the meaning and direction of human life and to nurture the human soul toward spiritual maturity. Since early childhood I have been aware of the *Book of Mormon.* I believe it to be authentic and a gift from Divinity partly because of the teachings of my parents, church school teachers, and others. But these alone were not sufficient. In my college years, challenged by expanding ideas and growing personal independence, I experienced skepticism about the *Book of Mormon* as well as other things. I made a long, intensive re-study of the book. I found myself deeply impressed by what I believe to be the Spirit of God, affirming the book's genuineness and spiritual value. My appreciation of the book is a continually expanding process. I have observed and shared in the dynamic value of the book as a spiritual resource for good in the lives of people. I cherish the *Book of Mormon* as one of the many gifts offered by our Creator to help us participate appropriately in his comprehensive plan for the redemption and eternal life of man.

Clair E. Weldon has been an appointee missionary since 1950, and is currently doing Spanish materials development work at the Auditorium.

EDITORIALS

THE POLYGAMY DEBATE IN THE CHURCH TODAY

The fact that a few polygamous people have been baptized in India has been of considerable concern to many members of the RLDS Church in recent weeks and months. Letters have been written and sermons have been preached — some by prominent men in the Church — opposing this practice.

In light of the current debate, Courage decided to ask for statements of defense and criticism, respectively, from a member of the church administration and a critic of the policy. We are happy to include in this issue a statement by Maurice Draper of the First Presidency and one by Verne Deskin of the Lamoni Stake High Council.

At the present time the debate seems to focus on the question of whether any polygamous person should ever be baptized. There is an underlying assumption that monogamy — the Christian attitude toward marriage — is somehow a prerequisite to baptism and a condition of membership for married persons. It seems to us that the debate needs to move beyond the mere consideration of polygamy as an absolute prohibition to baptism to the discussion of what the real prerequisites to baptism are.

This is not a simple matter which can be disposed of with a quick "yes" or "no" answer. Rather, it is an extremely complex matter which involves both spiritual and cultural principles and implications.

It is questionable, on the basis of RLDS scriptures, if ministers of the church have either the right or the responsibility to deny baptism to individuals desiring baptism in such cases. There is no basis in scripture for a view that a man must be morally pure or that he must know prescribed bodies of facts or knowledge before he is qualified for baptism. Baptism is an expression, a kind of symbolizing of Christ's death for all men. Christ died for men while they were yet sinners. God so loved, even those who are loveless, that He gave His Son.

We would do well to remember the scriptural assertion that man is broken by the law, and the only thing which frees him from the law is the realization of his acceptance before the Lord. Man doesn't have to live out his life trying to become worthy, but is freed to devote his energies in a life of praise to God and service to his fellowmen. The major scriptural basis for baptism in the RLDS Church, **Doctrine and covenants** 17:7, indicates that baptism is to be granted to those who (a) humble themselves . . . and witness before the church that they have truly repented of their sins, (b) are willing to take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ, having determination to serve Him to the end, and (c) manifest by their works that they have received of the spirit of Christ.

These seem to us to be valid criteria for evaluating a person's request for baptism. A minister of the church who denied baptism to a person who comes in this spirit would very likely himself be in serious error.

At issue is the conception which men hold as to the nature of the church. Is the church, according to the scriptures, a pure body? Is the church composed of completely pure and sinless people? Or is the church composed of people who are at the same time both saint and sinner, persons who are working together to work out their individual and social salvation? The scriptures seem to indicate that the latter conception is what is meant by the "church."

It should be noted that the church officials, in taking the stand they

have, are basically standing by the traditional position of the church with regard to polygamy, a position which is essentially conservative in nature. The polygamous individual requesting baptism is required to promise that he will refrain from entering into any further polygamous relationships. The church is not compromising its position here in any way. The discussion in regard to the issue has centered, not around basic issues, but around technicalities as to how to handle the relationships, commitments, and responsibilities which have flowed from prior decisions and commitments upon the part of the individual concerned.

There is a deeper moral issue involved here which, unfortunately, is not being dealt with. That issue is this: as we move into Eastern cultures, or any culture significantly different from our own, are we assuming that our particular culture and its values are inherently superior to the culture and cultural values of the nation into which we are going? Are we not basically immoral in ignoring the value system of other people's culture? Ultimately the church will have to deal with such matters as polygamy at this level. When we do come to the place wherein we are able to deal with cultural issues at this level we may wish to ask such questions as these:

Where do the scriptures and the teachings of Christ point in regard to the development of the church among a people? Do they not point to concern with broad, pervasive principles such as the sacredness, dignity, and worth of the human personality, attitudes of praise and thanksgiving and appreciation toward God, attitudes of responsibility, compassion, and love toward other men and women?

Would it not be preferable for the church on the World level to emphasize and teach these broad, pervasive elements of the gospel, and leave each people to evolve in its understanding, appreciation, and application of the gospel at its own pace and in its own cultural style?

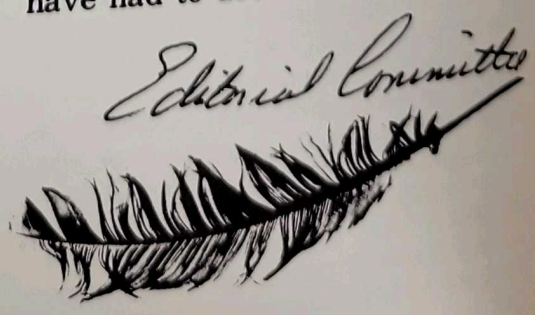
The evolution of the role of women in our own culture is a case in point. In our own society women have been exploited and discriminated against for centuries. It is only within very recent years that women have come to be perceived as individuals and personalities in their own right who were created on terms of equality with men. The practices that reflect exploitation and discrimination against women have not yet been entirely eliminated from our society.

It would, of course, have been absurd in our culture a hundred years ago to assert that a man could not be baptized until he had established his family on a democratic basis. Yet, was not the enslavement of women in our culture an enslavement in which women were considered the property of authoritarian husbands, every bit as sinful in the eyes of God as the treatment of women in a polygamous culture?

It is clear that in the American church, as well as in American culture as a whole, the present recognition of women as persons in their own right, worthy to be equal with men, has only been arrived at through years of growing and struggling to understand the meaning of the gospel.

In view of this, are we justified in demanding that cultures such as those involved in the present issue on polygamy accept the dictates of the American church without question? Ought we not be willing to let these churches struggle to understand the meaning of the gospel for their lives and their culture, growing in understanding through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, even as we ourselves have had to do?

Editorial Committee



WHO OWNS OUR HISTORY?

An eternal question the church asks is whether it exists for those seeking to be the church or for the purpose of preserving our institutional identity. One aspect of this question rests on the decision concerning who owns, and thus who controls, our history. Such a question has now become both timely and necessary for the RLDS Church.

The editors of **Courage** recently requested that a scholar doing research for an article on the early Reorganization be given permission to review the 1885-86 minutes of the Council of Twelve. This request led to a reaffirming of the previous policy that minutes of the Council of Twelve were not to be released for use in "other than official matters." Earlier requests over a long period of years have indicated a policy which makes the records of the leading quorums unavailable for researchers working on Restoration history, regardless of their credentials.

The Church's view of archival materials raises serious questions. If the concern is that these materials will be improperly used by rash persons then the council might have some grounds for concern. This has not been the case. **Courage** made the request for a reputable scholar; earlier cases cited have been from professional historians both within and outside the institutional church. This policy has held true for church members of good standing wishing to write for official publications like the **Herald**. These are men and women whose interpretive ability and knowledge of the traditions of the movement make them very competent judges of the value and use of sensitive materials. In many ways they are far closer and have deeper understanding of the material than the Council members could possibly have.

It is very difficult to believe that this material is so sensitive and full of matters of a personal nature that those now alive and involved in the church will be offended. The sins of our grandfathers are always with us but it is a rare man indeed who still carries the responsibility for defending such action. The Vatican Library and Archives, the second most "gun shy" institutional archives in the world, restricts its proceedings for only 30 years except in those special cases which are publically explained.

Surely the discussions of the Council of Twelve are not so far above us that we can't understand; or so full of damning evidence that they must be restricted "for our own good." We are not asking for open hearings nor for the key to the office safe, but for the records of decisions and activities that are 85 years old.

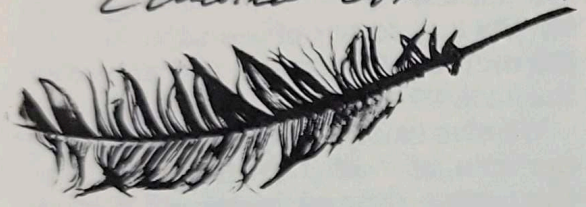
We also raise a question concerning the idea of "official matters." Does this mean official histories? Let us assume not, since the Council of Twelve must be vividly aware of the implications of the "1984" type of selected history. A good portion of the current unrest over the identity and direction of the Church stems from the fact that we have no "official" or "unofficial" history. No interpretive historian can write one under the present conditions. There is no doubt of the value of the recently published fifth and sixth volumes of **Church History**, but they are, in fact have been forced to be, listings of public activities. The author is acutely aware of this, as indicated in his introduction to Volume Five.

Our present cannot be explained by the traditional story of the past. Apparently we are still concerned with seeking to prove a position, not to inform. The question of the use of official minutes cannot now be removed from the fact that the non-availability destroys the records; or more likely it becomes a historic fact in itself and is thus an increasing part of the explanation of our lack of institutional communication.

The continued reluctance of the RLDS church to take its history

seriously means that we are not only "fated to repeat it" but that we will always require readjustment of our future to meet the past we have accepted, but never investigated or understood. The result is that our own free floating institution is increasingly irrelevant. Sooner or later we are going to have to open the closet and if a ghost falls out then face life with a ghost. As long as the door is closed for fear of someone finding out, or marked with a sign "History Off Limits to those whose lives it affects" then an increasing number are going to stop worrying about ghosts and wonder if the closet isn't just plain empty.

Editorial Committee



THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has been justly proud of the way in which it has historically refused to be bound by prevailing tradition. The presence of an open canon of scripture, a lay ministry and a social expression of the Kingdom of God on earth are a few of the indications of our willingness to re-evaluate and transcend existing tradition. Further, we have often recognized that the loss of courage to engage in continuous and rigorous examination of practices and beliefs would be a denial of an important, perhaps even crucial, characteristic of our movement. In a time when churches are struggling to survive, we cannot afford to perpetuate unproductive traditions. At the same time we recognize that change of practice and belief should not be made hastily or casually. There is always danger of throwing away efficacious traditions, of losing practices and beliefs that have great and permanent value in spite of changing times. But we would be less than true to our great heritage if we did not stand ready to consider, to examine, to test, to debate the usefulness of any existing tradition.

The editors of **Courage** believe that the members of the Reorganized Church ought to look seriously and objectively at the possibility of including women in positions of leadership within the church. In the larger society the extension of equal status to women and their full participation with men is an idea whose time has come. The church must respond to that idea in some way. If its response is to refuse to consider the issue, we are unworthy of our past and we jeopardize our future.

In the hope of initiating a discussion of the role of women in society at large we include in this issue a general statement by a young woman who is concerned about this issue. Further, we would like to direct our thinking to the issue as it relates to the church by raising two problems and suggesting alternative solutions to them. These are not intended as the last word, only the first.

Problem one: Our church assigns a second-class role to women. The major policy decisions at every level from the Joint Council to branch administration are made by all-male bodies. Women do not hold significant positions of leadership. Further, the special validation of priesthood call which is never available to women regardless of their spiritual qualities and abilities inevitably make the woman a second-class citizen.

Problem two: There is a shortage of priesthood manpower to do the work that is reserved exclusively for those holding priesthood office. Priesthood is withheld from women by our own tradition, not by scripture. The universal plea of leaders at every level is "God send us men." Translated into operational terms this means that there are often not enough priesthood members to conduct the public and private ministries of the church: administering the districts, preaching the sermons, deliberating the crucial theological issues,

working as salaried ministers, counselling the families with problems, supporting the lonely and frightened, etc.

We suggest two possible solutions to these problems. We challenge our readers to think of others. The most obvious solution would be the ordination of women. There is no scriptural basis by which women are excluded from priesthood. The absence of specific prohibition ought to alert us to the possibility that what we have inherited is one of those traditions of a strongly patriarchal society. Another solution to the above-mentioned problems would be to maintain male priesthood but to abandon traditions which limit leadership roles to holders of priesthood. A close examination of ministerial functions suggested by scripture might reveal tasks in our modern church organization which could be performed by laiety. Modern life has brought at least twenty years of productive time to women after children are raised. The middle class wife does not need to be gainfully employed during these years. Her abilities could make a tremendous contribution somewhere. At the present time not only our church but most of society is ignoring that potential contribution. There are also single women who have no family responsibility that would prevent full-time church work or effective part-time ministry.

Our intention here is not to suggest definitive answers. We are raising problems and posing possible solutions in an attempt to stimulate serious examination of the problem. If we ignore the necessity for discussion, if we shout down those who raise the issue, if we refuse to take into account that in the near future we are going to be required to explain to our young women members why they are not permitted to function in significant leadership capacities, we will run the risk of losing the most able of them to institutions and causes that are willing to utilize their abilities. Further, if we refuse to recognize that we have not yet made optimum use of the ability and dedication of at least half of our members, our institution will operate at a disadvantage in a crucial period of its history. A discussion of this issue, however we resolve it, will be of benefit to us all.

Editorial Committee

THE INSTITUTION AND THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Any institution which claims a special mandate from God as His instrument on earth is confronted with an all-important decision about truth. Does this mandate mean that the institution is the protector and proclaimer of a once-revealed truth or does it mean that truth should be constantly sought as something beyond and ultimately more valuable than the institution itself? It is impossible to escape the task of making this decision. Some make no vocal commitment; rather they quietly live out their assumed posture, while others announce vocally what they believe.

What an institution says it believes about its relationship to truth is not always a valid determiner of its actual stance. For instance, it may assert that the need for seeking an ever-increasing body of knowledge is recognized and provided for by its recognition of the need for scientific inquiry and more divinely revealed truths. But if the scientist and educator is frequently confronted with the charges of sowing seeds of doubt and not being spiritually inclined, and if revelation is so narrowly interpreted as to serve only the needs of administrative expediency, then the institution's stance

in regard to truth may vary somewhat from its imaginative assertions. In my opinion a good way of assessing the discrepancy between theory and practice is to determine the relationship between the institution and its intelligentsia and to analyze recent revelatory documents in terms of their substantive content.

In my opinion RLDS commitment to an ongoing search for truth has never advanced beyond the rhetorical stage. A case in point is the amount and kind of research being done on the **Book of Mormon**. With the advances in form and linguistic analysis it is virtually unbelieveable that the research conducted by the church is limited to half-hearted archeological forays. In an unscientific age such a posture would not be as potentially dangerous, but in an age when man's curiosity has taken him to the moon and his scientific thrust has allowed him to solve problems almost instantaneously that in another age would have taken many lifetimes to solve, who can be optimistic about such a myopic policy?

It is certainly not comfortable to live in the present age with its emphasis on the continual refinement of knowledge and practice. It is less comfortable if one wishes to hold to a static arena in which mythical presuppositions can frolic. It is virtually impossible to live optimistically trying to protect an authoritarian structure which can survive only by pretending others are either wrong or do not exist. Any religious body so zealous of its particular message that it erects walls to keep others out must realize that to keep others away it must keep itself in. If the confines of the wall are sufficiently small it has succeeded in building its own prison. The only ways of overcoming this situation are to flee, lose touch with reality, or tear down the walls.

When all forms of authority are being seriously challenged, a courageous acceptance of the spirit of inquiry is not unreasonable. No one, to my knowledge, has presented a viable alternative. It is time to stop straddling the barbed wire of indecision and take a stand before any stance becomes too painful to contemplate.

Leonard Johnson

FELLOWSHIP OF RENEWAL

A few weeks ago, two couples spent a long evening together, discussing the good experiences, problems, and the potentials which they had experienced as church members. Out of this sometimes sober and sometimes humorous discussion came the decision to contact other church members regarding their possible interest in participating in a "Fellowship of Renewal."

There were several reasons why this decision was reached. One reason lies in a driving concern about church priorities. The last World Conference of the church demonstrated a significant discrepancy between the views of the membership and those of the leadership regarding the use of money, programs, and people.

A second reason may be seen in the difficulty experienced in having a united voice about progressive legislation at district, stake, and World Conferences.

Further reason is found in the clear indications of decline in member support of leadership directions. This decline is seen in stewardship accounting, financial support, and baptismal rate.

Still further, the need for this Fellowship is seen as an antidote to the apparent conviction of World Church leaders that the church must move very slowly in order not to offend those who don't want change.

The Fellowship of Renewal is not an attempt to create a new church nor to be competitive with it. It is not anti-

church. It is not intended to be a carping and fault-finding association. It is not intended to be a highly-organized and structured association. F O R is intended to be a grassroots movement of people who want to have a more effective influence on the ordering of church priorities. It is to be an association of people within the church who believe that the church's commitment to community transformation should be radically increased. It is to be a series of regional membership groupings who share intergroup communication of local ideas and efforts at increasing the church's social relevance. On church-wide or world-wide issues and actions, these groups may find common strength at the World Conference.

The acronym F O R is intended to describe the positive nature of the association's ends and means. It is an amalgam of people in all walks of life who share a love for the church and a wish to reach common understandings regarding goals of renewal and means for a continuing achievement of it.

Much of the effort of F O R will be communicational. First efforts will aim at identifying interested church members through personal contacts, letters, and the media. Interested members in a given area or region will be enabled to get in touch with each other. Regional informal conferences of a week end duration will be held in member homes. Insights, plans, and programs for local and World Church action will be shared through authorship in the church media and an informal newsletter.

If you are interested in church renewal, you are invited to join in the Fellowship of Renewal. Send your name and address, the names and addresses of other interested persons, and your ideas to: Fellowship of Renewal, in care of Al and Shirley Fuller, 3014 Brookmont Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32303.

Albert Fuller

REALITY, REVELATION AND REVOLUTION

Reality is a hard lesson for today's revolutionaries who find no magic wand with which to remake the world in an instant. They discover that years of effort and toil are needed to make often infinitesimal changes in the social order.

The Christian Church should be among the most sophisticated revolutionaries, having spent 2,000 years in an effort to change mankind's way of life. Even the Christian misses the point at times, however. The true Christian must be willing to spend a lifetime of effort. He cannot rely on vague hopes for a miraculous new world, nor can he withdraw from the action.

Two qualities are needed in anyone who seeks to bring lasting changes in our world: participation and perseverance. Like it or not, our world is with us as it is. Only the juvenile will refuse to deal with reality and the harsh decisions it forces upon us. We must learn this brutal fact: men seldom, if ever, make decisions on the basis of what is right or even what is best. Rather, we make our decisions in the face of whatever alternatives are available to us. To refuse to do this because we don't like any of the alternatives is to reject life itself. Man's task is to create new alternatives.

Man can withdraw from this harsh dilemma in a variety of manners. Each are equal tragedies, for they deny mankind the creative energies of that person. Some simply disappear from the community of mankind. They despair of all hope for a better life. After a few defeats they give up, cause no trouble, make no contribution, and become a non-entity. They are tragic, but they are the least damaging.

Others react violently. Bitter at the alternatives which life offers, they respond in anger. They seek to destroy in a rage of suicidal madness. They live in a distant world having little or no relationship to reality. These are the men who bomb, who

kill, who burn. They naively assume that they can create a new world by destroying portions of the current one. They cannot understand that life is by its very nature tragic, that no man has the power to shape it to his own desires, and — worst of all — that change comes painfully slow. Lacking the courage to live life, they escape through their own distorted world. They bring no significant change to mankind.

There is a third manner of escape more common among Christians. These men, despairing of the basic nature of human life, also reject this world for a new social order. However, realizing that they alone lack the singular power to create such a new world, they look to supernatural powers to bring about the redemption. Christians thus distort the power of the Christ Act in a human life. Rather than Christ being a redemptive power that draws man into the creation of new social alternatives, Christ is relegated to a hoped-for revelatory factor to do what man cannot — and will not — do himself.

Our world is sorely in need of revolution. And our lives are desperate for enlightening revelation that can help us understand our own natures more clearly. But these will never come because of men who quit in despair, who resort to violence, or who rely on divinity. New options and alternatives for man will come only from the participation and perseverance of men who utilize their inborn powers for this purpose. It is in this way that divinity takes shape and that the Christ Act becomes manifest.

Power to bring change comes only from the definition, organization, and mobilization of resources available to man. Wise men find the courage to face this reality — tragic as it may be. They summon the courage to live life rather than run from it. These men are the real Christians.

Roy E Muir

Leonard Johnsen of Lamoni, Iowa, is the assistant director of the Upward Bound project conducted at Graceland College. Albert D. Fuller is an associate professor of social work at Florida State University and is pastor of the RLDS branch at Tallahassee. Roy Muir of St. Louis, Missouri is one of the founders of Courage and a member of its Editorial Committee.

The Farm Boy and the Angel. By Carl Carmer. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970. 237 pp. Index. $5.95.)

Carl Carmer is an entertaining writer. He writes with the style of a natural storyteller and has a long list of books, both fiction and non-fiction, to his credit. His latest book, **The Farm Boy and the Angel**, is an exercise in storytelling about Joseph Smith, Jr. In his foreword he says he has attempted to present the chronicles "as Mormons themselves present them." As one goes through the book it is obvious that the story is being told by one who knows how to highlight interesting episodes and maintain the attention of the reader. But one has the suspicion that the story is not being told as most Mormons, Utah nor Missouri persuasion, would tell it.

The author is a "gentile," which he explains is the Mormon word for all non-Mormons. And at every crucial point the non-believer's qualification is inserted into the narrative. Describing Joseph's 1820 vision in the grove, Carmer says, "He saw, or dreamed he saw, two figures . . . ." Speaking of the summer of 1827, the author writes that Joseph was either "waiting in awe and reverence the return of the angel" who had promised to deliver the golden plates in September, or "as skeptics have suspected, he was planning the perpetration of the most amazing hoax in history . . . ." Members of the Reorganized church, Carmer acknowledges, would not make the flat assertions he does about Joseph's polygamous marriages.

The title of the book indicates Carmer's story is solely about Joseph Smith, Jr. One of the author's basic problems is revealed when his subtitle is added: "The Mormon Vision and the Winning of the West." So, Carmer's volume is not really a biography of the farm boy. It is the story of the Utah church's origins, beginning with Joseph Smith. More than half the work is about the prophet. However, there are additional chapters on Brigham Young, the migration west, and Utah Mormonism today. Thus the story of Joseph Smith is set in the context of his role as founder of that interesting phenomenon in the west.

Carmer could have referred to farm "boys", plural, in the title of the book. Brigham Young's farm boy beginnings are pointed out as an interesting parallel to those of Joseph Smith. But the author is also fascinated by the later differences between the two men. He depicts them as opposites in manhood. The adult prophet is seen as the result of a sensitive and fanciful boyhood lived in the midst of superstitious people who believed in supernatural happenings and readily attributed occult powers to the young man whom they often employed for jobs that demanded clairvoyant abilities. Thus Joseph emerges as a mystical looker at seeing stones, a character without much depth or definition, an indecisive leader. Brigham comes on much stronger as the take-charge captain of men:

> The new head of the Latter-day Saints was to prove himself not only an effective administrative officer but one of the greatest leaders of men in all American history. He spoke the vernacular of his time with exactness of meaning, with occasional storms of emphasis, and with a homely but imaginative poetry. He had an intuitive knowledge of his fellows. He had common sense. He had a kind of down-to-earth spirituality. And he bristled with authority.

Sections of this book grew out of articles written by Carmer for **American Heritage**. Almost inevitably, then, there are some unfortunate rough places, involving jumps and repititions, that were not ironed out when the pieces were put together. For example, the experience in the grove is related three different times, each with a different emphasis. On the other hand, at the end of one chapter Joseph is being released from jail in Liberty, Missouri, and three pages further on, at the beginning of the next chapter, it is ten years later and Nauvoo is built and the powerful Legion organized, uniformed, and equipped. Events moved fast for Joseph Smith in the late 1830's and early '40's but never so fast as in Carmer's story.

Carmer's usually lucid style sometimes gets involved in flashbacks within flashbacks that must make the story difficult for the gentiles to follow. The book begins, for example, with Joseph about to dig up the Book of Mormon plates, and then the story jumps back to his earlier boyhood in New York and then further back to his family's beginnings in Vermont. And even an accomplished writer like Carmer can occasionally come up with misfire sentences like this: "While many rich members of other faiths have attributed their financial successes to the blessings of God, the Mormons are the only group that is convinced that the Almighty gives them prosperity because they are Mormons."

One of the most impressive parts of Carmer's book is the description of the prophet's last hours in Carthage jail. Here is a build-up of tragic events that commands the ability of the professional storyteller and Carmer handles it magnificently.

His picture of the Genesee country in Western New York in the '20's and '30's is also notable. He skillfully describes the drumlin landscape that formed "a ring of enchantment" around Palmyra. And those who want to understand more about the youthful years of the prophet will be helped by Carmer's account of local events such as the murder of the anti-Mason, William Morgan, the visit of Lafayette, and the doings of two local prophetesses, Rachel Baker and Jemima Wilkinson. All of these, Carmer believes, may have influenced the tall-tale-telling young "lake-country prototype of Huckleberry Finn."

But, Joseph Smith is the victim of his legend in Carmer's book. The author tries to capture his man solely through the retelling of stories about him and his times. Almost every tale of Joseph's dalliances with charms, both female and lapidary, are retold. But there is no attempt to reveal the man through his important works. The author does not consider, for example, the great ideas found in the early sections of the **Doctrine and Covenants** nor does he attempt to discover the kind of man who would comprehend them and set them down, sometimes in superb phrases. He does not explore what kind of man it took to conceive and build the city of Nauvoo, which he notes was the largest in the state of Illinois when Joseph was killed by the Carthage mob. Carmer avoids such questions. This is as close as he comes to discussing the mind behind the prophet's adult accomplishments:

> Joseph's imaginings ever throughout his life led him into more ambitious dreams. The snowball of his faith had been set rolling and was enlarging with gathering impetus.

Carmer is, mostly, retelling a story, adding some important historical color to increase its value and reader interest. He does not use footnotes for documentation but he has added an up-to-date bibliography showing his sources. In general, his book reads like an extended magazine article. And in that sense, it is an entertainment.

Roger Yarrington

Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible. Compiled by Paul A. Wellington. (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1970, 523 pp., $9.95.)

The purpose of this latest publication of the "New Translation" of the Bible is stated in the Foreword as being an attempt to give "ready access to the total specialized treatment of the Bible prepared by Joseph Smith, Jr. in the 1830's and the 40's." It purports to "compare in totality the differences which accumulated in this New Translation which evolved as the Prophet sought enlightenment while he and other associates paged through their King James Bible."

This is a worthy task and a much needed publication, and the Herald Publishing House is to be commended for attempting to bring together all of the textual changes which were effected by the Prophet Joseph Smith in his work with the Bible. Placing these in parallel columns with the King James Version makes the textual variants readily accessible to all who wish to become acquainted with the "New Translation," or as it is commonly called, the "Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures." Anyone who has tried to search out the textual variants for himself will appreciate the immensity of such an undertaking.

The introduction consisting of three articles by F. Henry Edwards, and which were originally published in the **Saint's Herald** in 1967, adds to the value of the publication. Mr. Edwards' articles are enlightening and interesting and present the kind of informational background that could only be obtained by an examination of the original documents from which the printed editions of the Inspired Version of the Bible were prepared.

However, as is often the case in the first editions of publications of a highly technical nature, there are some significant shortcomings and weaknesses which have no doubt occurred unintentionally and seem to be the result of insufficient investigation and/or carelessness in the preparation of this book. The most noticeable deficiencies are as follows:

(1) There are numerous passages that were revised by the Prophet Joseph, which are in the regular printed editions of the Inspired Version, but which have not found their way into this comparison. This apparent oversight by the publishers should be remedied in future printings, but there are so many omissions that it might require a complete new setting of the type. Perhaps the passages could be added in a supplementary section and placed in the back of the book. A partial list of missing passages includes, Exodus 3:3; Psalm 19:13; 27:3; 37:38; 105:42; Isaiah 2:2; Corinthians 1:17; 5:14; 5:16; 5:19; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 2:11; I Thessalonians 2:16; I Timothy 3:8; 2 Timothy 4:1 and I Peter 5:13. Also, Hebrews 5:7-8 does not contain a textual revision, but should be accompanied by an important explanatory footnote. The footnote is missing in this publication. All of the foregoing reference citations (which is not a complete list) are from the printed editions of the Inspired Version.

(2) Some of the variant readings that are given are not actually revisions, but are due to different editions of the King James Version rather than to deliberate revision by the Prophet Joseph. The Prophet used an edition of the King James Version printed in Cooperstown, New York in 1828, and it should be observed that editions of the King James Version printed that long ago often differ in use of articles and pronouns and the spelling of some words from editions of the King James Version printed today. It should also be observed that editions of the King James Version printed in Great Britain differ in spelling of some words from editions printed in the United States.

Thus, when the Inspired Version reads: " . . . a hundred and fourscore" (II Kings 19:25), and the King James Version reads "an hundred and fourscore," and the difference in

text is only the indefinite article, this is not a deliberate verse revision by Joseph Smith. This reviewer has examined the King James Bible used by Joseph Smith, and knows this to be a fact. Since there are a great many comparisons of this nature in the book, and no explanation is given concerning it, it creates a tendency to lead the reader to the unwarranted conclusion that these passages were the work of the Prophet.

(3) The manuscript prepared by Joseph Smith and his scribes includes no changes whatsoever for the books of Ruth or Ecclesiastes; yet this publication lists some minor variants in these books involving indefinite and definite articles, and also minor spelling variations such as "veil" and "vail" (Ruth 3:15), "further" and "farther" (Ecc. 8:17). There are many such variants, but again, these are due to the edition of the King James Version used in the comparison and not due to the work of Joseph Smith. This situation should probably be explained in the Foreword of future editions. Actually, the book of Ecclesiastes is not even mentioned in the manuscripts prepared by the Prophet and his scribes.

(4) The book also presents for comparison those passages having a verse number that differs from the King James Version, even if there is no textual difference. This is misleading since the detailed versification of the Inspired Version is not the work of the Prophet, but rather of the RLDS publication committees of 1866-1867. This fact perhaps should be explained in the Foreword.

(5) The format is somewhat awkward. It is customary in parallel columns to place the King James Version on the left and the Inspired Version on the right. In this instance the order is reversed. Although this is only a matter of taste, it is at first a little disconcerting.

It is not intended that anything in this review should lessen the importance of the Inspired Version or discredit the goals and desires of those who have prepared this valuable new publication. It is simply an observation that in some respects the book falls short of being a "comparison in totality of the differences" that were effected by the Prophet Joseph, while on the other hand in some instances the book tends to go beyond what the Prophet actually did. Future editions could benefit from a more thorough explanation in the Foreword, and also a supplement of the missing passages.

One further observation. In Mr. Edwards' second installment (page 14) he raises some questions concerning the date, content and comprehensiveness of the Bernshisel copy of the inspired version manuscript, (which is in possession of the LDS Church Historian in Salt Lake City) and states that "we do not know" the facts concerning it. The interested reader will be pleased to know that the entire text of the Bernshisel Manuscript, accompanied by an extensive description, including dates, is on file in the RLDS Historian's Library in the Auditorium in Independence.[1] This was not available at the time Mr. Edwards first prepared his paper in 1967.

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1. This is contained in "A Study of Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible", unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, BYU, 1968, by Robert J. Matthews.

Robert J. Matthews

Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible. By Robert J. Matthews. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1969, 86 pp., paper, $1.50.)

Robert Matthews is perhaps the leading authority on the Inspired Version of the Bible, having written both his master's thesis and his Ph.D. dissertation on it. This little book is another contribution to understanding Joseph Smith's "New Translation."

It is interesting to note that Dr. Matthews, who belongs to the Utah Church which does not formally recognize the New Translation as part of its canon, has done more work on this than perhaps any member of the Reorganized Church, which recognizes and publishes it. And he certainly has greater appreciation for the New Translation than do many RLDS members.

The first chapter gives a careful chronological history of Joseph Smith's labors on the New Translation. Then after brief chapters on the original manuscripts and on the reliability of editions printed by the RLDS Church, he sets about to show how the New Translation adds to our knowledge on certain important topics. He notes that there are some errors in the printed editions of the New Translation, but he says that these have been reduced in number with each new printing. "There is no particular evidence of mischief or of intent to deceive by the RLDS Church," he concludes.

Dr. Matthews makes certain assumptions that this reviewer challenges. First, he assumes that changes made by the Mormon founder constituted legitimate restitutions of the original Biblical text, on the assumption that "many plain and precious parts" had been taken away. This reviewer suggests that the New Translation is better seen as a commentary on selected portions of the King James Version. If the changes made by the prophet were restitutions of the original text, discoveries of ancient documents and Biblical manuscripts in the last century should have produced some evidence that this is the case.

Sidney B. Sperry, reviewing this book in **Brigham Young University Studies**, asks, "Why, for example, did Joseph practically pass by the book of Hosea, the most textually corrupt book in the Old Testament?" If Joseph were restoring the original, he would have had to make many changes in Hosea. Perhaps a reason for the lack of revision in books such as Hosea is the possibility that Joseph Smith simply hurried through the twelve minor prophets at the end of the Old Testament, in order to complete the job. The date of July 2, 1833 appears on the Inspired Version manuscript at the end of the Old Testament. Matthews notes that that same day the First Presidency wrote a letter which stated: "We are exceedingly fatigued, owing to the great press of business. We this day finished the translating of the Scriptures." Since only four words were changed in the last nine books of the Old Testament, the brethren were quite possibly in a hurry to finish.

Secondly, Matthews seems to assume the traditional Mormon view that the New Translation was not completed: "the work is very evidently unfinished." Yet he presents much evidence that tends to support the view that all that remained to be done, in the prophet's mind, was the work related to getting the New Translation ready for printing. He gives evidence that Joseph Smith wanted to have the revision published.

Those who say the New Translation was complete, as RLDS people tend to say, can point to the fact that we have manuscripts to cover the entire Bible (with the exception of Ecclesiastes, apparently omitted due to an oversight). Matthews makes his best point for the theory that it was not complete when he indicates that after the job was done there were notes made in the margins and pinned onto the manuscripts.

Matthews makes an important point when he says that Joseph

Smith's revision work was an important part of his prophetic calling. It was while revising that "many things were made known" to him. Matthews points to four revelations which were directly based on his Inspired Version work (Utah revelations numbered 74, 76, 77, and 91) and he contends that perhaps eight others were the result of these labors (Utah sections 84, 86, 88, 93, 102, 107, 113, and 132).

Much of the latter part of the book is given to showing how certain Latter Day Saint doctrines are "supported" by the New Translation. One of the best known additions to the Genesis account is the idea of the antiquity of the Christian gospel. "Adam was instructed to do all things in the name of the Son of God, and later Adam was baptized by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ," writes Matthews. The New Translation even creates an ancient "heresy" whereby it is asserted that at the time of Abraham there were those who were trusting in the blood of Abel, rather than in the blood of Jesus Christ (see Genesis 17:4-7 in the New Translation).

The idea of an unchangeable God does not fit well with the notion of God repenting, changing his mind, or dickering with patriarches and prophets. Nor would God cause evil, or harden the hearts of people. So these "errors" of the old Testament are changed. It is not good to see Jesus as human, so the superhuman element is increased, and it is asserted that Jesus couldn't be taught (apparently since he had nothing to learn). The New Translation overcomes Paul's concept of man's helplessness, and asserts that man must build the kingdom. Accountability at eight years is inserted into chapter 17 of Genesis. Passages suggesting the doctrine of predestination are changed to alter that doctrine — a doctrine very unpopular among Latter Day Saints.

To expect people to accept such changes, made without textual evidence, is asking a great deal. It is rather convenient that the changes happen to support Latter Day Saint views. If John Calvin had produced a "New Translation" of the Bible in which he greatly increased the doctrine of predestination and other Calvinistic concepts, we would not likely be impressed. We can hardly expect non-Mormons to be impressed with the New Translation.

Chapter 7 deals with contradictions that are resolved in the New Translation. Several examples are given. Matthews gives no acknowledgement of the many more Biblical contradictions that are not cleared up in the New Translation. This reviewer is not arguing that the contradictions should be cleared up. Quite the contrary. When Mark differs with Luke, for example, the difference can be assumed to be due to the fact that the evangelists differed in the first place. To create a harmony between the two accounts in such an instance is to unfaithfully translate the text of one or both of the books at that particular point. Joseph Smith, like the later Princeton theologians and the twentieth-century fundamentalists, assumed a basic harmony of the original manuscripts; any differences must be assumed to be due to copying errors.

It is unfortunate that so many Latter Day Saints are hung up on the assumption that the New Translation presents the most accurate English translation of the original texts. To understand the Bible, we should read the modern versions. Three very recent ones are especially worth mentioning: the New English Bible (1970), the New American Translation (1970), and the Jerusalem Bible (1966). If one prefers the style of the old King James Version, the Revised Standard Version of 1952 is good.

This is not to fault Joseph Smith for making the attempt. The King James Version needed revision in his day. But we have erred in seeing it as a restoration of the original Biblical text. To perpetuate this idea seriously retards Biblical understanding among Latter Day Saints today.

William D. Russell

Publish Glad Tidings: Readings in Early Latter Day Saint Sources. Edited by Wayne Ham. (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1970, 444 pp., $8.95.)

Many people in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints believe that the Reorganization preserves the Restoration. They have in turn concluded that what the church is today (what has been preserved) is what the church was in the 1830-1844 period. Because of this assumption, there has been little study of the early church to determine what in fact it was.

In the first chapter of **Publish Glad Tidings** Wayne Ham states that "the winds of change are blowing everywhere, even through our dusty archives and vaults, and they are bringing to us a new sense of urgency for the task of understanding who we are as a people by understanding who our fathers were and why they were as they were." He concludes the book with the observation that "Tomorrow's past is happening now, and our stewardship involves being aware of those historical circumstances that have brought us to this day. Only then can the history we are forging be created in the light of the best wisdom we can muster." Between the two statements is a resource which should go a long way toward helping us "understand who we are as a people by understanding who our fathers were and why they were as they were."

Publish Glad Tidings is a selection of readings from the four journals published by the Latter Day Saints during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr. Editor Wayne Ham has brought the readings together with just enough background material to place them in an understanding and historically sound context; from there on they speak for themselves. The selections of readings and context-setting materials occupy four hundred three pages of the four hundred forty-four page volume. Added to this are three brief chapters by Ham in which he skillfully presents the problem familiar to institutions, governments, and individuals of either not knowing their past or of preserving unrealistically romanticized ideas about it. He also points out a fact which, unfortunately, many followers of Joseph Smith have failed to grasp: that the founder of the LDS churches and those associated with him were **people**. "Joseph Smith, Jr.," Ham states, "has become a sanctimonious symbol — unblemished, untarnished — for some Latter Day Saints, rather than a man of flesh and blood. This unearthly canonization of the prophet is not fair to him."

Latter Day Saintism did not grow in a vacuum; it was not developed and packaged in Heaven and then delivered by Celestial express to Earth via the Palmyra Depot. Chapter two provides background of the general setting which made possible the growth of the new religion. LDS apologists have long argued that Joseph Smith was an uneducated farm boy who was not possibly smart enough to do what he did without divine guidance. This reviewer feels that Wayne Ham has perhaps struck at the mother lode in the mine of LDS origins when he reasons that:

> Yet in spite of his lack of schooling, this young man was obviously rich in imagination and ingenuity, and extremely dexterous at making a creative response to whatever circumstances happened to thrust themselves upon him. His interests and concerns ranged widely over a number of areas, such that even in his early years his family felt that he would someday make history rather than merely coast through it unnoticed.

The selections in **Publish Glad Tidings** can be read at different levels of understanding. The person who is simply interested in gaining amusing incidents from the everyday life of the mid-nineteenth century will enjoy W. W. Phelps' calculations in **The**

Evening and the Morning Star which prove that in 1832 there were only nine years left until the end of the world, not the one hundred fifty-five years which Christians commonly assumed to be the correct number. Another reader might infer from this something of the mind-set of those early members. A third reader might see some connection with Phelps' conclusion, after a lengthy explanation to prove the correctness of his calculations, that "whether it be 160 or only 9 years to the morning of the Great Day, is not so much matter, as the solemn reality — Are we ready?" and Joseph Smith's warning that "no man knoweth the day nor the hour." Yet another reader might see Smith's admonitions in this direction as a result of what he considered undue speculation on the subject, as illustrated in Phelps' writings.

Publish Glad Tidings gives an excellent cross section of the contents of early LDS journals, which in turn give a cross section of the beliefs, hopes, struggles, heartaches, successes and failures of the people. It is a good investment for anyone interested in Latter Day Saintism, be he a strong advocate, neutral observer, or skeptic.

Graphically the book leaves much to be desired. The dust jacket and binding were well chosen to blend with the theme of the book; more facsimiles from the original journals would enhance the volume. What few illustrations are included appear to have been haphazardly selected, and their printing is of a quality only slightly above that of a newspaper wirephoto. While better graphics might make the pages come to life more with the times represented, the editor has, however, more than made up for this deficiency with his selection of readings and commentary.

Wayne Ham writes that:

> Nothing is so sure as change in our world, and our view of the changes occurring throughout our history as our people responded creatively to the changing world about them will encourage us and free us to be responsive to the kinds of changes called for to meet the challenge of ministry to the world of the twentieth century.

Publish Glad Tidings should go a long way toward helping Latter Day Saints realize that the church founded and guided by Joseph Smith, Jr. was an active organism responding to and trying to influence its environment. If the Reorganization wants to truly preserve the Restoration, perhaps this is the most basic principle to be preserved.

Daniel T. Muir

The Mormon Churches: A Comparison from Within. By Francis W. Holm, Sr. (Kansas City: Midwest Press, 1970, 238 pp. Available through Herald Publishing House, Independence, Mo., at $4.95.)

We are living in an age of paradoxes. The decade of the 1960's has been one of confrontations, of demonstrations, of turmoil, and of rioting. In the midst of this conflict, however, people have become increasingly aware of the problems afflicting our civilization, and many have united to resolve various aspects of the developing crises. In the religious world, the past decade has been an era of ecumenicalism in which friendly dialogue between members of various faiths has been a noteworthy reality. This spirit of cooperation has been evident among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (who sometimes will be referred to as Latter-day Saints or LDS) and members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (sometimes designated as RLDS).

In the midst of a growing spirit of cooperation, Francis W. Holm, Sr.

has written one of the best summaries of the differences dividing the "Mormon churches" that has been published. This work also is the most complete description of the differences that persist that is currently available. Holm's knowledge of the history and beliefs of the two denominations stems in part from the fact that he was raised in the LDS faith and then became a member of the RLDS. He has been baptized and ordained to the priesthood in the two faiths; and as a member of the RLDS served as a missionary and worked in the office of the Presiding Bishop.

Occasionally, in this publication, Holm challenges policies adopted by the church to which he now belongs. He does not approve, for example, the policy of the RLDS of placing many salaried "professional ministers" in positions of local leadership and says that his church "does not emphasize the teaching and instruction of their membership and priesthood to the extent" accomplished by the LDS. He also praises the LDS position concerning tithing, the word of wisdom, welfare, and various aspects of their organization and notes the significant differences in the pattern of growth of the two denominations. He also criticizes both denominations for their policies concerning succession to the presidency. "Both churches have erred," Holm maintains, in the "area of setting precedents" that in his opinion interferes with God's "sole right of selection."

Although Holm approves many programs of the LDS society, he criticizes their position of permitting deacons and teachers to administer the sacrament and throughout his work reveals the reasons he is a member of the RLDS by defending the theological position of that communion.

Although in his acknowledgment Holm extended an appreciation to Dr. T. Edgar Lyon for his "extensive and extremely helpful analysis of the book," when Dr. Lyon reviewed this publication for **Dialogue** he detected many weaknesses in Holm's interpretations. These limitations, according to Dr. Lyon, resulted from a failure to examine thoroughly historical sources of the Restored Church. Holm, for example, failed to realize that baptisms for the dead were practiced in Nauvoo from 1841 to immediately before the exodus in 1846 and ignores Joseph Smith's introduction of the endowment ceremony. He further incorrectly concluded that re-baptism was "required of everyone that entered Salt Lake Valley" and specified that "re-sealing" implied a "re-ordination."

Holm's description of the LDS practice of polygamy also reflects his failure to examine innumerable primary sources located in the LDS Church Historian's Office. Moreover, there are a number of statements in this work which need qualifying, such as, "the Manifesto stopped the authorized practice of polygamy in the church," and "it is claimed by the Mormon Church that the doctrine (baptism for the dead) was introduced to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple at the time of the appearance of Elijah."

One of the significant differences dividing the two faiths pertains to the subject of scripture. Although Holm stated that Joseph Smith "clearly" did "not intend" the **Book of Abraham** to be regarded as scripture, he was silent in presenting a defense of this assumption. Under the date of February 19, 1842, Wilford Woodruff expressed in his journal that the Lord was blessing Joseph with power to reveal ancient records as old as Abraham or Adam. "Joseph the Seer," he added, "has presented us some of the **Book of Abraham**" which has "come to light through the mercy of God." The memorial which Joseph wrote to the High Council in June, 1840, further reveals that Joseph regarded his unfolding information included in the Egyptian record in a light similar to other revelations which he received (**Documentary History of the Church**, IV, 136-37). LDS have taken the position that the material from the Inspired Revision of the Bible that had been published

during the lifetime of the Prophet and with his consent could be published with enough new material from the Prophet's most complete revision to tie the extracts together in a continuous sequence. But, the remainder of the Inspired Revision was not to be published without permission from the Prophet Joseph or the Lord, because, LDS maintain, Joseph did not complete his final revision of the work. LDS further conclude that they are justified in publishing the **Book of Abraham** and the **Book of Moses** because the information had been published during the lifetime of the Prophet and with his approval.

Since the two Mormon churches disagree on the sources of religious truth and LDS claim that in their possession are many primary sources informing mankind of the teachings of the Prophet Joseph that are not endorsed by the RLDS, theological differences between the two denominations persist. It is hoped, however, that the spirit of cooperation and various expressions of Christian love will continue. In one respect, Francis Holm has contributed to the spirit of ecumenicalism by penning a work that is comprehensive in scope, detailing the differences in the two denominations. Yet, the work is not written in a negative, debunking tone, but is an honest appraisal, in the view of the author, of the beliefs and policies of two faiths whose historical roots stem back to a theophany which occurred in a beautiful grove in western New York.

Milton V. Backman, Jr.

Roger Yarrington is editor of the Junior College Journal and pastor of the RLDS branch in Washington, D. C. Robert J. Matthews is Director of Academic Research for the Seninaries and Institutes of Religion for the Mormon Church. William D. Russell is an associate professor of religion at Graceland College. Daniel T. Muir is a graduate student in history at the University of Connecticut. Milton V. Backman, Jr. is a professor of religion at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Wayne Ham's "Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History," as set forth in the September 1970 issue of **Courage**, seems to throw a challenge to all believers in the Restoration. The lengthy article emphasizes the author's problems. It resorts to innuendo in many spots instead of forthright statements.

One innuendo is the introduction of the idea that Ethan Smith's book, **View of the Hebrews: or the Ten Tribes of Isreal in America**, printed in 1823, provided a thought pattern for the **Book of Mormon**. But no evidence was given that Ethan Smith's book was ever read by Joseph Smith, or that the book was even available to him in 1827-1830. The **Book of Mormon** does not contain the ten tribes theory. The idea is pointless.

Another inneundo is the subtle suggestion inserted by quoting "author and proprietor" which Joseph had to use to copyright and protect the book. Ham's statement conveys the idea propagated by enemies of the church, that the **Book of Mormon** was the work of man, rather than under God's direction.

Brother Ham alleges that the saints had not intelligently answered the Gentile critics, but "by and large took refuge in their 'spiritual testimonies' concerning the divine authenticity of the book." A true spiritual testimony at the right time and place is the best kind of evidence, but should not be cast before swine.

It amazes me how some of the R.L.D.S. college men seem to use their talents to join the rabble in passing on unsupported testimony of the church's persecutors, and expect us to credit this to their superior knowledge of truth. Brother Ham refers to the angel who visited Joseph and revealed the hiding place of the plates. In one place Joseph, by a slip of the tongue, called him "Nephi." This was later corrected, but the enemies of the church still like to point out the error of using Nephi instead of Moroni. However, this statement is not in the **Book of Mormon** text so should not have been brought into the subject under discussion.

Another innuendo dropped by just a phrase is "hat? peepstone? Urim and Thummim?"

These negatives are picayunish, thrown in as mental blocks, and carry a presumption of scholarly wisdom to the unwary.

His first problem of how the plates were translated is not nearly as important as the message conveyed. Delbert Smith's booklet, **The Credibility of the Translation of the Book of Mormon** presents the most reliable testimony of witnesses who should know.[1]

The second problem which is put forward is that of identifying the narrative to a particular setting. He says, "To my knowledge, no non-Latter Day Saint archaeologist allows the **Book of Mormon** any place whatsoever in his reconstruction of the early history of the New World." This is not very significant. I admit the problem, but point out that all of the archaeological finds do point to a higher degree of culture than the early settlers thought possible from the natives they encountered. Should archaeological evidences be found establishing the **Book of Mormon** claims of divinity, perhaps archaeologists acknowledging the facts would no longer be non-Latter Day Saints.

Ham's third problem is that the **Book of Mormon** covers most of the doctrines of frontier theology plus anti-Masonry. Does that make them wrong? So what? (Masonry is not mentioned).

His fourth problem is that the **Book of Mormon** anticipates Christ's

mission and made his mission and his suffering " largely wasteful." This criticism is valid only to the mind which refuses to accept the principle of revelation, and that faith works as effectually in anticipation as in historical perspective.

His fifth problem concerns the ethical teachings of the **Book of Mormon**, and he cites as evidence the slaying of Laban and holy wars. This is serious in modern civilization, but seemed quite natural in ancient Hebrew culture. "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come." (Doctrine and Covenants) It is unfair to judge an ancient culture by modern standards. Our advancement in the sacredness of life seems to break down rather easily even in the social order of today's world.

His sixth problem is the duplication of such teachings as the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, and "298 biblical snatches from the New Testament." The inference seems to be that of plagiarism by the "author (or editor, or compiler) of the **Book of Mormon**." There is positive evidence that Oliver Cowdery's work in writing the entire **Book of Mormon** extended for a period of not over 90 days. No charge was ever made that Joseph took time to look up references and quote them. Why did Brother Ham not deal with this **time** element of producing a 588 page book in such a short time? Let me suggest it would not have served his seeming purpose to cast doubt on the divinity of the **Book of Mormon.**

If the Holy Spirit was directing the prophets of ancient America, as we have reason to believe, why could not there be a parallelism with that given in Palestine? Should Christ speak to people here in this land, would you be surprised that it would sound like the Christ of Palestine? Wayne Ham seems to negate this concept.

His seventh problem is the quoting of "21 chapters of Isaiah" in the **Book of Mormon.** Nephi felt so directed and does not conceal the fact that it was Isaiah's work. But the article in **Courage** says that some of Isaiah was written by a later prophet after Lehi left Jerusalem. The deutero-Isaiah theory is put forth by theologians who generally discount the theory of divine revealment. Things which happened after the seventh century B. C. "must have been written by a later prophet, as Isaiah could not have known that," they argue. Strange logic for an R.L.D.S. elder. This is not a problem to all theologians or scholars. Some, equally as well educated, reject the deutro-Isaiah theory.[2] The Dead Sea Scrolls, much older than the oldest surviving texts, contain nothing which really supports or refutes the deutero-Isaiah theory.

The eighth Ham problem is the alleged anachronisms — using words and ideas before their time. In recent excavations artifacts resembling the modern have been found. No better testimony can be given than finding actual specimens of silk, linen, grain, and animal skeletons and using names we know.[3]

The English versions of the Bible are not transliterations — word for word translations of the original tongue. Why should an R.L.D.S. elder feel that Joseph's work would not use words now understood to express the ideas shown him on the plates, such as wheat, cows, and adieu? Isaiah predicted a time when "darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." (Isaiah 60:2) **The Book of Mormon** describes those whose minds have become darkened in these words: "When they are learned, they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsels of God." The conclusion of the prophet Nephi reads: "Their wisdom is foolishness, and it profiteth them nothing. And they shall perish." (II Nephi 6:59)

The final and ninth problem cited is that changes were made to the **Book of Mormon** since the 1830 edition. The 1837 edition had nearly 4000, though admittedly most of them were grammatical. In the Lord's preface we are told that its faults "are the mistakes of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God."

Brother Ham cites one verse of 392 words. In the Foreword of the 1966 edition, a statement by the printer, John H. Gilbert of the 1830 edition, affirms that there was no punctuation in the chapters till he put them there. This problem has been largely corrected in the last edition. After seeing their printed material many authors wish they could make corrections in or changes in what they have written. The Bible has gone through thousands of changes in modern versions. This does not mean that it is merely a "fascinating piece of literature" instead of holy scriptures.

The concluding paragraph of Brother Ham's article seems to condemn the R.L.D.S. who have "hangups involved with having to accept unquestioningly the historicity of the **Book of Mormon.**"

I affirm it is a problem of whether God selected its writers, and preserved the plates to come forth and be translated by divine power; or whether this is just a mystical, fascinating story. The more serious hangup obviously is with those who are full of doubts and ready to put Joseph and the eleven witnesses in the category of deceivers and liars. Three witnesses said the plates were shown to them by an angel. The eight other witnesses were shown them by Joseph Smith and they "did handle them with our hands." To impugn the testimonies of Joseph and the eleven witnesses as false and to affirm the **Book of Mormon** as only "a fascinating piece of literature" is to destroy the veracity of our church's founding fathers. No sane man would want to follow such leaders. The church is irrevocably committed to the **Book of Mormon** as Holy Scripture, which ranks equally with the Bible and **Doctrine and Covenants.**

John foretold that in the latter days another angel was to come to earth with the Everlasting Gospel. He would come before the hour of judgment, calling upon the nations to worship the Creator. (Rev. 14:6-12) Many may miss their calling, but this should not happen to faithful R.L.D.S.

It is my feeling that anyone who does not believe in the divinity of the Three Standard Books of the church should not be employed by the Department of Religious Education to write materials for study in the church.

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1. The editors-in-chief preferred to leave James Lancastor's article, Nov. 15, 1962 **Saints' Herald**, as the final word, so Seventy Delbert Smith, an appointee of over 20 years experience, had it printed at his own expense.
2. Otto Eissfeldt quoted by Prof. Hugh W. Nibley with approval in his book, **Since Cumorah** p. 138-143, discounts the two Isaiah theory. Prof. J. N. Washburn pointed out that Isa. 2:16 quoted in the Book of Mormon is not like the King James version, but is like the older Greek text, known as the Septuagent, which was not available to Joseph Smith. A broader discussion of this problem can be found in the **Commentary on the Book of Mormon**, by Chris B. Hartshorn, pp. 81-83.
3. This may be found in the book, **Lehi in the Desert**, by Prof. Hugh W. Nibley, pages 210, 211. It is also presented in my **Commentary**, pages 57-59. See also W. H. Prescott's **Conquest of Peru**, Book 1, p. 225; quoted in my **Commentary**, p. 453.

Chris B. Hartshorn
Independence, Missouri

To the Editor:

There is evidence in the article, "Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History," that more research should be done by those in the church who believe the **Book of Mormon** is not historical. It is suggested that the early Near East be studied in depth, as well as more

authorities on ancient American archaeology. Many authorities, well informed and not church members, do not agree with some of the facts and ideas presented in this article. Certainly no one would expect authorities who are not Latter Day Saints to use the **Book of Mormon** as a reference in their archaeological work, but many discoveries by non-member historians and archaeologists do support the historicity of the **Book of Mormon**.

For example, the article says that Toltec, Maya, and Aztec ruins have been identified with **Book of Mormon** times when all the periods were too late to be valid. Miguel Covarrubias dates the end of the Pre-Classic period all the way from 200 B. C. to A. D. 317. He says the Maya moved into the early Classic period around A. D. 34. From about A. D. 60 to A. D. 373 (Spinden dating) came the period of large stone cities, carved monuments, dated stelae, elaborate temples, and beautiful ceramics.[1] John Eric Thompson dates the beginning of the Classic Period as about A. D. 200 and says the real golden age of the Maya civilization was before A. D. 200 and not during the later decadent flamboyant classic period.[2] Michael D. Coe also places the end of the Pre-Classic period at A. D. 200-300, with some sites ending before A. D. 200.[3] Victor W. von Hagen says that before A. D. 200, Uaxuctun was already on its cultural way.[4] The Maya were already into the beginning of their declining flamboyant period by A. D. 400. The Toltecs copied much from the latest decadent Maya civilization, which had retained some knowledge and customs from the earlier golden age. The Aztecs borrowed in turn from those who came after the Maya. Both of these later civilizations created their civilizations from the earlier people and were like them in many ways according to most authorities.

The American frontier theological concerns discussed in the article as being represented in the **Book of Mormon**, have been represented in this world since the early centuries of Christianity and some of them even before that in the Near Eastern pagan and Hebrew rites.[5] For instance, baptism was called by different names such as purification, but it was a part of very ancient rites, in different forms.[6] In the **Book of Mormon** Jared talked with and had knowledge of Christ and Christianity long before Christ appeared on earth.[7] Jared saw many things to come, just as did Nephi.[8]

The complaint is made that the **Book of Mormon** peoples knew the details of Jesus' life before he was born, and Christ is portrayed as a supernatural being before it was believed. This is not surprising in view of the claim of the **Book of Mormon** that Jared and Nephi both knew about Christ and saw the future. If the people who doubt the truth of the **Book of Mormon** believe in Christ as portrayed in the Bible, they must also accept the idea that ancient Babylonian mythology about a similar god, born of a virgin, who died and was resurrected, proves that these early pre-Christian people also knew about Christ before he was born. Otherwise, Christ must be a myth as well, copied from much earlier Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greek mythologies.[9]

Questions of Freemasonry, covered in the **Book of Mormon**, are given as criticism of the book. But, Masonry in the **Book of Mormon** is not strange, since the Masons claim origin in the Temple of Solomon, and some of Masonry came from even earlier Egypt.[10]

The article discredits the **Book of Mormon** because of the mention of silks, Copernican astronomy, advanced medical knowledge, and modern animals including the horse, among many other possible anachronisms. Both the early Near East and Ancient America had knowledge and made discoveries before Europe. Many early Near Eastern inventions were lost to Europe for centuries. Also, the Ancient Americans must be given credit for their intelligence and knowledge. They did know many things about

astronomy and medicine before Europe.[11] Their production of textiles was ahead of both Europe and the Ancient East. The people of Peru, as early as 2500 B. C. developed ways of producing "almost every kind of known fabric, including tapestry, embroidery, and lace-like gauze."[12] Pre-Inca textiles had from "250 to 300 threads to the inch, which is finer than the finest cloth produced by our machines looms today."[13] "In tapestry Peru reached its highest development, placing this kind of textile in a class by itself — making the Gobelin and even the Chinese silk tapestry appear coarse and heavy in comparison . . . their cleverness in adopting most intricate design and overcoming the technical difficulties of the loom is something that has never been accomplished by any other people . . . ."[14]

The claim that the horse recorded in America by the **Book of Mormon** before it arrived by way of Europe has also been disproven. Many animals, including horses, have been found in the western tar pits and elsewhere in America in their prehistoric state, as well as in early pictographs.[15] In the **Book of Mormon**, Jared's group brought the animals mentioned in the article with them, in prehistoric times (before 2200 B. C.). There are no dates for Jaredite arrival in the **Book of Mormon**, and Ussher's dating for biblical events is not usually accepted.

Many more examples can be given and authorities quoted to support the historicity of the Book of Mormon. These examples are certainly no more biased than the use of opinions of early church enemies. If the **Book of Mormon** is fictional, as claimed in the article in question, there are some powerful coincidences to explain. Therefore, it is suggested that more research be done before criticising the validity of the **Book of Mormon.**

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1. Covarrubias, Miguel. **Indian Art of Mexico and Central America.** New York: A. A. Knopf, 1957, p. 225.

2. Thompson, John Eric. **Maya Archaeologist.** Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

3. Coe, Michael D. **America's First Civilization.** New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1968.

4. Von Hagen, Victor Wolfgang. **The Ancient Sun Kingdoms of the Americas.** Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1961.

5. Reik, Theodor. **Pagan-Rites in Judaism.** New York: Farrar, Straus and Co., 1964.

6. Carpenter, Edward. **Pagan and Christian Creeds.** New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1920.

7. Ether 1:68-93.

8. First Nephi 3:37-256.

9. Campbell, Joseph. **Masks of God: Primitive Mythology.** New York: Viking Press, 1959.

10. Newton, Joseph Fort. **The Builders: A Story and Study of Freemasonry,** Rev. New York: Macoy, 1951.

11. Morley, Sylvannus Griswold, and George W. Brainerd. **The Ancient Maya** Rev. 3rd ed. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963. Von Hagen, Victor Wolfgang. **The Ancient Sun Kingdoms of the Americas.** Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1961.

12. Weaver, Kenneth F. "The Five Worlds of Peru," **The National Geographic Magazine,** (Washington D. C., February 1964), pp. 228-257.

13. Verrill, A. Hyatt, and Ruth Verrill. **America's Ancient Civilizations.** New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953, p. 68.

14. "Ancient Peruvian Textiles," **The Museum Journal,** University of Pennsylvania Museum (Philadelphia, September 1920) p. 140.

15. **The University Museum Bulletin,** Vol. 4, No. 5, (Philadelphia, October 1933) pp. 126-130.

Gloria C. Malotte

Augusta, Michigan

To the Editor:

I was shocked as I read Wayne Ham's article in the September issue. It was written objectively after considerable study of available data with no regard whatsoever for the consequences to the church membership. One can assume this is the function of a person who is seeking truth wherever it exists, but people engaged in pure research are usually careful where they present the results of their research.

Courage has been advertised in a way to draw subscribers from the church at large, including all levels of intellectual and educational ability. It has not been confined to any particular segment of our membership. For this reason, the editors have the responsibility of determining what articles should be included in each issue.

The **Book of Mormon** is inseparably related to the Restoration movement. The book and the Restoration came through Joseph Smith, Jr.; he brought them forth at the same time; he claimed divine inspiration for both; and both have been inseparable companions in the minds of the membership of the church the past 140 years. This puts them in the "Siamese twin" category, meaning they cannot be successfully separated in the religious life of our membership without serious spiritual damage.

Mr. Ham frankly acknowledged that he has not conclusively proved any really significant points, which makes his article of questionable value. He has, however, made statements that imply that Joseph Smith was projecting his own imagination into the translation process, and that the process and degree of divine inspiration cannot be determined.

I believe the editors made a very serious mistake in printing this article. If **Courage** was confined to specific segments of our church population, I would not object to the article. However, it is not so confined, and I fear that much damage has resulted to an unknown number of our church. Most of our people have no means of protecting themselves from the implications involved.

I hope the editors will be concerned with the spiritual life of our people as well as the basic purpose of **Courage**.

Robert W. Gunlock
Des Moines, Iowa

To the Editor:

Congratulations on yet another fine issue of your magazine. In my judgment, you have now printed two scholarly articles, one on "The Book of Abraham in the Light of History and Egyptology," by Richard Howard, and a second, "Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History," by Wayne Ham.

Both articles were, I felt, objectively done until their final paragraphs. The author of the **Book of Abraham** article asks that "The Latter Day Saint community seek a viable, twentieth century interpretation of the **Book of Abraham** which not only sustains its integrity, but also purges its sense of history." Wayne Ham, in his final paragraph, states: "None of the above problem areas 'disprove' the **Book of Mormon.**"

Both of these disclaimers appear at the ends of articles which, in themselves, cast grave doubts on the integrity, ability, and candor of Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of the Latter Day Saint church. To borrow the title from another article in the September issue, it would appear that the authors suffered from a "Loss of Nerve." They are unable to continue down the road which their research is leading them.

After demonstrating that the translation of the **Book of Abraham** was a total fabrication, passed off by Joseph Smith to his credulous followers as a revelation of divine will, the author calls for "a viable,

twentieth century interpretation of the **Book of Abraham** which not only sustains its integrity, but also purges its sense of history." How can the "integrity" of a document which is a total fabrication be sustained? And why make the attempt? Of more interest is the question, "Did Joseph Smith knowingly perpetrate a fraud on his followers, or was he convinced of his supposed abilities as a translator of Egyptian writings?"

Essentially the same question should be asked at the end of the Ham article. Here the author is stating concisely what all of the non-Mormon world and some within the Mormon community have been saying for years — namely that the **Book of Mormon** is a work of religious fiction, clearly reflecting its 19th century origins. What I cannot understand, however, is the opener of Ham's concluding paragraph, namely the statement that his discussion of the problem areas does not disprove the **Book of Mormon**. As I read it, that is precisely what it does.

As a former member of the church who is now a professor of the social sciences at a major university puts it: "To my uncomplicated mind, the church stands or falls on the **Book of Mormon**." Joseph Smith made specific claims as to the divine origin of the book. These are interwoven with the angelic visitations, the restoration of the priesthood, and the supernatural instructions on the organization and founding of a church. A discrediting of the **Book of Mormon** claims can only have the most serious consequences on the credibility of the whole structure of Latter Day Saintism.

An examination of the consequences of the conclusions reached in these two articles is the logical next step for the authors. Reason will not be served by last-paragraph confessions of orthodoxy.

Biloine W. Young
St. Paul, Minnesota

To the Editor:

Since my article appeared in the September issue of **Courage**, it has come to my attention that not everyone in the church is enthusiastic about the prospects of allowing a nonhistorical view of the **Book of Mormon** to exist among our membership. This comes as no surprise. However, for me the crucial issue here is not whether or not the **Book of Mormon** narrative is historical but whether or not one who is unable to affirm its historicity by reason of conscience will be accepted in the church as a faithful follower of Christ and a committed participant in kingdom building. Apparently some in the church would judge a man's faithfulness to the gospel by the degree of fervidness with which he supports traditional understandings of our inherited Restoration resources.

Some unfortunate denominations have experienced the indignity of "witch hunts" and heresey trials. Our own movement has had many conscientious members forced into early retirement from congregational participation, usually by uncharitable criticism and ostracism at the local level. The question that will be confronting the church over the next decade as the so-called liberal-conservative debate grinds on is to what extent, if any, a person can deviate from a cherished view held by the majority without endangering the spiritual well-being of the community of faith. And on what specific issues? Must we all agree on the Virgin Birth, on the prescription against hot drinks in the Word of Wisdom, on the nature of the Trinity, on the relationship of the church to the world, and on our approach to the scriptures, in order to be considered members of the church in good standing?

In this highly diversified world of the 1970's we seem to encourage, in theory if not always in practice, a certain pluralism in the church in terms of ethnic composition and cultural backgrounds. We are proud to have Tahitians, Koreans, Nigerians, Indians, New Zealanders

and other nationalities involved in the worldwide fellowship of the church. Is it preferable, then, in the theological realm to cultivate the pluralism of thought and belief which now most assuredly exists among our membership or to seek a uniformity of theological approach from which a solid, identifiable "party line" will emerge? I would suggest that the old motto "unity in diversity" may serve us well here and hold out to us the only real hope we have for unifying the church membership in the significant task of truly being God's agents for human betterment in a needy world.

Wayne Ham

Wildwood, Florida

To the Editor:

I seriously and sincerely doubt the wisdom of your venture into controversial dialogue. I want to say, however, that I do not question your good intentions. Nor do I minimize the importance of scholarly research. I subscribe to our creed if it be such: "Truth — all truth." Also that "the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his word."

But there are two articles in the April, 1970 issue that I have grave doubts about as to their serving any constructive purpose. I refer first to the editorial statement of purpose, "The Critical Function of **Courage**." In this article some readers might feel that you imply that the Exodus from Egypt under Moses had no divine help. Rather that this move was due only to the genius of Moses and that their subsequent conquest of Palestine was only a power struggle for land. Also that Joseph Smith was not divinely led, but that he was only a man "who had certain abilities and who lived at the right time and place to produce a movement that has over two million followers today." Some might conclude that the movement was built upon fraud because of the ambition of a clever young genius. Now I hope you did not intend to raise these doubts. But honestly I don't think Fawn Brodie could have succeeded better in raising these doubts. She wrote with a skeptical attitude in the first place, while your article is written within the "house of faith."

The other article that was of dubious value is Brother Harold Schneebeck's "The Doctrine of the Church," in which he states: "In the face of the awesome human needs which we see in the world it is a travesty to waste our resources in the attempt to convert members of the other great religions of the world — not to speak of wasting them in the attempt to convert our fellow-Christians." Does not this viewpoint come pretty close to repudiating the Great Commission that Christ left with his disciples soon after his resurrection? Now I had previously read Apostle Cole's article in the **University Bulletin**. I did not think Brother Cole intended to leave the impression that we should be unconcerned or uncommitted to a social gospel, in striving to alleviate the social ills and injustices in the world. Nor that he espoused a doctrine of isolationism from the world. I rather think he was trying to place the true mission of the Church in the light of the clear teaching of Christ. Christ could have cured all the social ills, eliminating poverty by "turning stones into bread." He could have thrown off the Roman yoke, freed all the slaves, but it would have been a victory of a temporary nature, usurping man's agency. Only the gospel of Christ can change the hearts of men. Christ could not or he would not coerce men from being greedy and covetous.

Courage might at best have some value within a very limited circle of the Church, but the rank and file, the great body of the Church upon which the spiritual and financial structure of the Church rests, do not have the scholarly attainments that the editorial staff of **Courage** may possess.

At the time of my conversion to Latter Day Saintism, I was a

professor in a college; and while reading the strange (strange to me) **Book of Mormon** and pondering over the peculiar (peculiar to me at that time) concepts of the Reorganized Church, I felt then, and I hold fast after these thirty odd years in the Church that I had spiritual insight into the authenticity of the **Book of Mormon** and into the inspired goals of the Church in espousing the cause of Zion. Had I at that time had access to the articles referred to I might have concluded that Joseph was an imposter rather than a prophet, and that the Church at best was no better than any other Christian fellowship.

True research and sound scholarship in search for truth is one thing, but delving into controversial dialogue and questionable speculation is something else. The pursuits of truth in this manner may lead us up a blind alley of unsound philosophy and into a sea of secular confusion.

Jerry C. Fitch

Nashville, Tennessee

The editorial committee welcomes letters responding to the contents of this and subsequent issues of Courage.

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